

Among Wild Tribes Of The Amazons



Charles W. Domville-Fife

AMONG WILD TRIBES OF THE AMAZONS

AN ACCOUNT OF EXPLORATION & ADVENTURE
ON THE MIGHTY AMAZON & ITS CON-
FLUENTS, WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THE
SAVAGE & HEAD-HUNTING &
ANTHROPOPHAGOUS TRIBES
INHABITING THEIR
BANKS

BY

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OF TO-DAY," &c., &c.

WITH 27 ILLUSTRATIONS & 6 MAPS

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A GHASTLY TROPHY.

A human head from the Upper Amazon region. Dried and shrunken it measures only four inches from neck to crown : The lips are sewn together with long cotton strings.

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AMONG WILD TRIBES OF THE
AMAZONS

AMONG WILD TRIBES OF THE AMAZONS

CHAPTER I

DAWN ON THE AMAZON

A REMOTE tribe of savages, known as the Yahuas, inhabiting the Equatorial forests of the Napo, who to this day wear their hair long and dress in capes and skirts of grass, resembling women, caused the largest river system in the world to be called "The Amazons." These savages persistently attacked the little expedition commanded by Francisco de Orellana during the famous journey from Ecuador down the Rio Napo to the Amazon and the Western Ocean in 1539-1541.

The tales told by this explorer, and by those who came after him, caused the old story of Herodotus, regarding a race of women warriors called Amazons, to be applied to the inhabitants of, and consequently to the great region and river of, American Equatoria. Curiously, however, the mouth of the Amazon was really discovered thirty-nine years earlier by Vincente Yanez Pinzon, and the great Portuguese navigator, Pedro Cabral, whose galleys entered the world's largest estuary on the 26th day of January in the year 1500.

These adventurers gave it the name of "Mar

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Dulce," or "Sweet Water Sea." The probable reason for this is found in Marajo Bay, where the water is exceedingly pure, and is still used by ships traversing the lower reaches of this amazing river system.

This, then, was the first glimmer of dawn on the Lower Amazon, but for many years the light of knowledge burned dim, although fleets were fitted out in Europe to explore the newly found land, "crossed by a yellow-coloured sea." It soon became the El Dorado of the century. Columbus, seeking a mysterious region, "beyond the Ethiopian Sea," discovered South America. Others sailed their galleys into the great estuary or along the adjacent coasts. Facts were plentifully embroidered with fiction in the tales told by those who returned. Sandy beaches washed by a yellow flood became the golden foreshores of a silver sea, the *maloccas* of weird natives became the palaces of Manoa, where dwelt the Golden One, whose body was covered with glittering sequins eclipsing the sun, the moon and the stars.

It was in this way that fantasy became responsible for stimulating into amazing activity the minds and bodies of European adventurers. Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of Alonzo, the conqueror of Peru, was one of those inspired by the myths and fables of the age. He assembled a band of adventurers in his brother's domain in the year 1539, and, journeying overland from Peru, crossed the Andes and passed through Ecuador in an endeavour to find what was then considered to be the transcontinental fresh-water sea. Incidentally, he swore to wrest from the El Dorado at Manoa his armour of golden sequins.

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Like many others who followed in his footsteps during subsequent centuries he was defeated by the millions of square miles of Equatorial forest, river and swamp.

Pizarro accomplished something, however, by his months of wandering in the Ecuadorian Montaña, although of his most important discovery he knew nothing until another had reaped the benefit. In the field of exploration he had brought his little band of pioneers near to the source of the Napo river, a more or less navigable tributary of the fresh-water sea. Commercially he had collected from the natives a quantity of virgin gold, estimated, no doubt erroneously, at 100,000 lb., or 45 tons! This hoard was entrusted to Pizarro's lieutenant, Francisco de Orellana, who constructed a crude boat, took aboard the gold, and, leaving the remainder of the adventurous band, set sail on the River Napo with the object of obtaining provisions for the now starving members of the main expedition. Once started on the swift-running Napo the current prevented a return, especially as no place where provisions might be obtained could possibly have been sighted.

Whether or not it was possible for Orellana to beat back against the current and rejoin the remainder of the expedition is problematical. Prescott and others maintain that it was possible, and this was evidently the judgment of the court which tried Orellana for treachery after his return to Spain. Moreover this is the view expressed by Padre Carvajal, who wrote the chronicles of the Pizarro expedition.

The forlorn conquistadores, headed by Pizarro,

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made their way to the north-east, reaching the Orinoco by way of the Cassiquaré, and finally returning to Spain from the Venezuelan coast. Although this half of the original expedition failed to discover the Amazon, it performed one of the most wonderful feats in the history of exploration, as a glance at any map will show.

The early light of dawn now appeared on the Upper Amazon. Orellana succeeded in accomplishing the almost incredible, yet historic, journey down the thousand miles of the Napo, and, eventually, the further two thousand miles of the Amazon to the open sea. Returning to Spain with the treasure entrusted to him by Pizarro he described his adventures on the famous journey. He told of continual attacks, while descending the Napo, by women warriors with pale bronze skins, long fair hair, and armed with arrows, shields and darts. Whether he actually mistook the Yahuas Indians of the Napo region, with their long hair and grass capes and skirts, for a race of women fighters emancipated from male dominion, is problematical. Certain it is, however, that these and similar stories—one of which concerns a tribe of Indians who now inhabit the Serra de Parentins, at the boundary of the states of Pará and Amazonas, whose women formerly went into action with the men for the purpose of recovering spears and arrows—caused this great river, and the still largely unknown region which surrounds it, to be called "The Amazons."

It was in the glorious age of adventure, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that ships first sailed for the Spanish Indies from English shores. Some of these entered the estuary of the Amazon in their efforts to

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discover the mysterious El Dorado which was yielding its treasures to the merchant adventurers of the Peninsula. Foremost among the captains of those days was Sir Walter Raleigh, the Queen's favourite, who sailed on 5th February 1595 for the island of Trinidad, which he succeeded in capturing from the Spaniards. Turning his attention to the mainland, he crossed the narrow arm of the Caribbean Sea, and ascended the Orinoco river. Before being driven back by sickness and death among the crew he succeeded in getting into friendly communication with some of the wild tribes of the Orinoco-Amazon forests. From these he professed to learn of a city of gold in the far interior. Fantasy was so mixed with fact in Raleigh's descriptions of this journey that they served little or no useful purpose, beyond stimulating the desire of adventurers to cross the Spanish main to this El Dorado guarded by women warriors.

To follow each feeble attempt to raise the veil of mystery a little further from the bewilderingly vast area of unknown Amazonia would not only be tedious, but almost impossible. All that can be done here is to name a few of the famous explorers who have contributed to the world's still meagre knowledge of these dim jungles, open prairies, mountain ranges, maze of tropical rivers, reptile-infested swamps, strange native races and wild beasts. Many, whose names and deeds are quite unknown, have performed feats of exploration, endurance and sacrifice, within the silent walls of these million-mile forests, which, had they been set down in print for the civilized world to read, would have been hailed as epics of adventure even in these

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blasé days when feats of exploration have all but ceased to interest a commercialized and self-centred world.

Among the more renowned explorers of this wild region may be mentioned Orellana, the discoverer of the Upper Amazon; Acunas, the Jesuit missionary who visited the native settlements along the main stream in 1698; Fritz, in 1717; Bourdonnais, in 1733; and that great traveller of the eighteenth century, Humboldt, in 1749. Next there was Alamada, 1787; Montravel, 1843; Selfridge, 1882; Rodrigues, 1875; Shaw, 1883; and Caudeau, 1892. Then came those who represented important learned societies—such as Martius, 1819; Von Spix; Wallace, the naturalist, 1848; Bates, the entomologist, 1849; Spruce, the botanist, 1860; Agassiz, who dealt largely with fish, 1866; Chandless, 1880; and Stradelli, 1889.

Others there were who fell victims to fever, poison, the wasting disease of beri-beri, malaria, snake-bite, or the ferocity of anthropophagous tribes, like Émile Robuchon, of whom no trace has ever been found, although generally believed to have been killed and eaten by Carijonas Indians in north-eastern Peru; Du Murez, who died from the wound made by a poisoned dart, in the forest of the Upper Madeira; Pinzon and Cabral, who both died of fever; those of the first ill-fated American Madeira-Marmoré Expedition, whose deaths were tragedies of yellow fever, murder by Indians and starvation in the twilight forests; the prospectors from Iquitos killed by the Huambisa tribes of the Santiago river, and Khoeler, who died of wounds inflicted by the Cashibos Indians of the Pampas Sacramento.

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There are also those who came out alive from the great forests, and who have since given to the world all that it now knows of these mysterious regions. Foremost among these is the Baron Sant' Anna Nery, the famous Brazilian writer, who spent a large part of his life in unknown Amazonia; Henry Savage Landor, who received a subsidy from the Brazilian Government, and traversed much of the eleventh parallel, between the Araguaya and Marmoré rivers, in 1911; J. F. Woodroffe, who roamed the Amazon rivers for nearly eight years, between 1905 and 1913; Theodore Roosevelt, on the Aripuanan and the "River of Doubt"; Colonel Fawcett, whose work on the frontier is well known; the late Colonel Saurez, to whom the Beni and Acre territories of Bolivia and Brazil were an open book; Wickham, who explored the Tapajós-Madeira Plateau, and obtained the seeds of the rubber-tree, which, in more recent years, resulted in the rubber plantations of the Orient; Earle Church, the American engineer, pioneer of the Marmoré railroad; Lieutenant Maury and M. d'Orbigny, in the Beni and Madre de Dios regions; Sir Everard im Thurn, in Guiana; Algot Lange, on the Lower and Upper Amazon; G. M. Dyott, in north-eastern Peru; and many others in quite recent years, some of whom were met by the writer, either inside or outside the pale of civilization, and whose names will therefore occur in subsequent pages.

Mention must certainly be made of those gallant officers of the Indian Service of Brazil and the Overland Telegraph Commission, such as General Rondon, Bento Lemos, and others, whose work among the wild

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Indian tribes is far too little known outside South America.

All who have lived or travelled in these great tropical forests will agree with the statement that an army of explorers ten times as numerous as those who have in the past visited the Amazon could not have laid bare all the secrets of this semi-dark, barbarous, impenetrable and incomprehensibly vast region of Equatorial forest, river and swamp. No sooner are the waterways left and the jungle entered, no matter in what latitude or longitude, than one stands on the threshold of the unknown, the "edge of beyond." So it is after months of wandering, hacking through primeval growth, where vision is limited to the green walls and roof: there is ever the unknown and unattainable beyond.

Enough has now been said of the history of exploration in Amazonia to show that far fewer and less systematic efforts have been made to subdue this immense wilderness of tropical forest than has been the case in East, West or Central Africa. Asia has many blank spots on its map, but they are comparatively of small area. The Poles have been reached, and almost every sea surveyed and charted. Africa is no longer the dark continent of the world, it has been explored and subdued from the Cape to Cairo, and Guardafui to Verde. Yet the repeated assertion that "there's nothing more to explore" is quite untrue. In the dead heart of South America, between the fifth parallel north and the twenty-fifth south of the Equator there are over 2,000,000 square miles of unknown or little-known territory, with hundreds of unheard-of

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native tribes, as will be demonstrated in the following pages.

Absence of international competition has caused a lack of initiative which has left this vast area of the world's surface uncared for and unknown. This Montaña Grande begins at timber line on the continental slope of the Andes, and, figuratively, extends for about 3000 miles across the wide northern or tropical portion of the lost continent, to the narrow civilized littoral of Brazil, and from the great Guiana forests to El Gran Chaco, a distance, north and south, of 2200 miles. Here and there in this vast lone land is a tiny oasis of civilization amid a sea of barbarism. Here and there is the blazed trail of the isolated pioneer who emerges racked with fever, and dazed by the dim light of the forest; but still a *terra incognita* and the home of unknown races of mankind.

The explorers, traders and half-caste rubber gatherers, who have penetrated into the forests from the maze of navigable rivers, have all discovered something of material value to the outside world: gold, silver, precious stones, timbers, new medicinal essences and drugs, unique curios, relics of extinct races and beasts, open *campos* and cattle-breeding prairies, gums and varnishes, inland seas, queer natives, and a soil of wonderful fertility, with vegetation reaching its maximum point. It can be easily understood, therefore, why the nations within whose vaguely defined frontiers this huge territory is nominally situated have, from time to time, offered to the explorers and nation-makers of the civilized world generous assistance and wonderful inducements for its exploration and development.

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Between 1843 and 1910 the Bolivian Government offered sums of money aggregating \$500,000 to the first person who, in a steamer, reached Bolivia from the Atlantic by way of certain unexplored Amazonian tributaries. In 1911 the Brazilian Government granted a substantial subsidy to Mr Savage Landor to enable him to carry out his expedition into the unknown forests of Matto Grosso. Since then the inducements, in one form or another, have been both numerous and considerable.

The successful construction of the Madeira-Marmoré railway—the most wonderful forest railway in the world, and at the same time the most isolated—focused attention on the possibilities of light railways of penetration as a means of overcoming the enormous distances and impenetrable forests of these dead regions. At the same time the question arose as to the navigability of certain unexplored and semi-explored rivers which might be used as lines of communication. These considerations produced a veritable crop of problems concerning the presence and hostility of Indian tribes in the different localities, the degree of unhealthiness of the climates in diverse areas, the effects of swamps and seasonal floods, the nature of the forest growth, intervening ranges or lakes, the possibility of establishing plantations and colonies of immigrants along the rivers and routes. None of these vital questions could be satisfactorily answered in the detail required, because much of the territory had never been explored, and its peculiarities, and those of its native inhabitants, were consequently unknown.

Having spent much time travelling on the highways

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and in the byways of South and Central America in quest of information for the insatiable Anglo-Saxon Press of two continents, I was approached regarding a reconnaissance in Amazonia. This, then, was the reason for my first entry into this field of exploration. Keen personal interest resulted, and in more recent years I have travelled through these still wild lands on a variety of missions, including a journalistic quest for the London *Times*, literary material for my books, and the organization of an intelligence and publicity service for an important nation-making group.

Here it must be pointed out that the immense unexploited areas of forest, *campos*, river and swamp known by the comprehensive name of Amazonia, although owned very largely by Brazil (over 1,000,000 square miles unmapped and all but unknown), also extend far beyond the frontiers of that nation into the states of Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela, to say nothing of the three Guianas, adding another million square miles of unknown, and making what has been aptly termed "The Lost Continent"; therefore a region as large as the whole of Europe is involved.

To reduce this to manageable proportions—as some areas were, for obvious reasons, quite impossible—was the preliminary task of these journeyings. Different lines of advance were eventually chosen for reconnaissance, and, while technicalities or elaborate geographical or scientific details have been left out of this book as irrelevant to the subject, these routes, with certain deviations from them, will be followed in subsequent pages.

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The difficulties of reaching these remote areas of forest were often great, and much of little general interest must be passed over lightly, or even left out entirely, in the narration of events in order to make room for closer descriptions of the wild tribes of the remote forests with which this book is primarily concerned. In former volumes, especially the one entitled *The Real South America*, I dealt fully with the more civilized parts and what may be termed the approaches to the unknown; in *The United States of Brazil* I surveyed that immense confederation of states which owns a considerable proportion of this dead heart of the continent; and in other works, as well as in articles which have from time to time appeared in various papers and journals, the economic possibilities of these rapidly developing states were described. Little or nothing was known of vast tracts of country, and, although powerful nations had grown up around the coast, a thousand miles away, these great central forests, with their naked anthropophagous tribes and head-hunters, remained a land veiled in the deepest mystery.

The Great European War of 1914-1918 caused a temporary break in my journeys of exploration into unknown South America. Whether by ordinance of the law of opposites or merely the result of the chances of war my sphere of activity was suddenly and dramatically changed—much to the detriment of my health—to submarine hunting in sub-Arctic Seas. About this phase of a restless existence I have, however, written elsewhere, and it is sufficient to say that in 1920 I again journeyed across that peculiarly lonely stretch of

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tropical sea which lies between the island of Madeira and the St Paul Rocks.

There is a saying in Amazonia that he who tastes the juice of the *assai* palm and likes it will be irresistibly drawn back to the great forests and rivers of this mysterious land. However this may be, and few will deny the glamour of the unknown, barely two years elapsed before 1922 presented its claim, and I find myself writing these lines, the preliminaries of a book covering all my Amazonian travels, on the shelter deck of that most comfortable vessel of the Booth Line, R.M.S. *Hildebrand*, bound for the Amazon—this time not for the swamps or the twilit forests of the remote rivers, but on a new and distinctly interesting mission in the “Darkest Africa” of the present century.

CHAPTER II

SETTING OUT FOR THE INTERIOR

TRAVEL off the beaten track, whether undertaken in the Arctics or the Tropics, requires far more careful thought, experience and preparation than would, perhaps, appear necessary to the uninitiated. No reliable or topographical maps can be purchased for a few shillings in a geographical establishment; no guides who have "been before" can be hired; food of a special kind and carefully packed must be carried for the whole estimated time to be spent away from civilization, with a good margin for safety. Then comes the most dreaded problem of all, possible illness—and with regard to this I would like to say that a careful study of the American methods of drugless medicine and bloodless surgery, combined with a few chemical preparations and tabloid drugs, prove by far the most suitable and efficacious.

To ignore these difficulties, so far as this story of events is concerned, and to plunge straight into the forests of the remote Amazons, would not only be utterly misleading, but much like setting out to describe a campaign and telling only of the final victory or defeat. All pioneer work in unexplored—or even semi-explored—country, whether undertaken alone or as one of a party, is, in reality, a campaign against all the forces of nature. Sooner or later, as the weeks or

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months away from civilization pass laboriously by, every force and artifice of nature will stand in the pathway of the pioneer. Whether the enemy is strong or weak depends upon a variety of factors which involve a study of strategy to determine. Distance from a base of supplies, lines of communication, climate, hostile action, casualties, and a hundred and one considerations come up for judgment.

A study of any ordinary map might give the impression that the fifteen days' sea-voyage across the South Atlantic in a Booth liner, from Liverpool to Pará—the civilized city and port at the entrance to the maze of waterways known generally as the Amazon—lands the traveller and his baggage within week-end distance of wild tropical jungles and savage Indian tribes. So far is this from being the case that the real journey towards the unknown only begins at Pará, and may end anywhere within 3000 miles of this port. It is true that areas of wild tropical forest can be easily reached in a few hours from that city, but the only savage tribes likely to be seen are those portrayed in the fine Indian Museum. There are, however, some tribes of savage Indians in the forests of the Upper Tocantins, reached in about six days from Pará.

Before going any further a general survey of the country we are about to enter may not be out of place here. To parody the geographical reader. There are three zones in Amazonia: the *known*, the *little-known* and the *unknown*. The first of these includes the lands, *albeit* tropical forests, bordering the delta and Lower Amazon, with its numerous islands, which have the city of Pará as their emporium; also the very numerous

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plantations and small settlements on both banks of the main stream, and at certain points on its principal tributaries. Within the category of the little-known are those more or less accessible forests visited by *seringueiros*, or gatherers of wild rubber. These are principally confined to strips of jungle bordering reaches of river navigable by launches and shallow-draught steamers. To gain access to the unexplored the traveller has to pass through the two foregoing belts of territory, often a distance of several hundred miles, and enter the vast areas of forest situated around the head-waters of almost every Amazonian river, or between these thread-like fluvial highways.

No arbitrary line can possibly be drawn that would adequately indicate the limit reached by the outposts of civilization, which seldom extend more than a few miles beyond the immediate vicinity of the numerous small settlements. Although this applies to the primeval forest, with its fevers, beasts, birds, reptiles, insects and swamps, it does not always apply to the native tribes. For the really savage specimen, many of whom have scarcely reached the Stone Age, one has to seek far afield in this vast land. Those Indian families who dwell on the banks of the rivers navigated by launches usually exhibit certain signs of civilization—possibly only a dirty shirt or a battered hat, but, nevertheless, some outward and visible sign that their days of uncontrolled savagery, warfare, head-hunting, weird ceremonies, and hatred of the white man have passed away. The call for gifts takes the place of the hiss of the poisoned spear.

On the upper reaches of the remote Amazons,

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however, and in the heart of the great semi-dark forests, many savage tribes live in complete ignorance of the world beyond the seemingly endless sea of tropical growth. To reach these remote jungles, however, from such centres as Pará, on the Lower Amazon, Manáos, on the Upper Amazon, and Iquitos, on the Marañon (Peruvian Amazon), usually involves a journey of anything from 200 to 2000 miles by shallow-draught river steamer, then by canoe, and finally on foot into the dark forest.

Owing to the difficulty of hiring native canoe men and carriers, or of replenishing supplies of civilized stores *en route*, baggage of all kinds has to be cut down far below what would be considered either safe or conducive to efficiency in countries like Central Africa, where native labour is easily obtained. As the story proceeds the difficulties and restrictions, to say nothing of the dangers, caused by this unavoidable reduction of impedimenta far below the usual minimum for tropical exploration, will be apparent to the reader. More than once health was sacrificed and life itself hung in the balance.

At Pará, reached after a pleasant voyage from Liverpool, I received every possible assistance, not only from the British colony, but also from the Brazilian state officials, who were literally untiring in their efforts to supply the most up-to-date and reliable information, although as this, my first, journey in Amazonia was to take me into the unknown forests of Matto Grosso, from the upper reaches of the Tapajós river, little guidance could anywhere be obtained. I wondered then if any traveller has ever started on a pioneer

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journey into a country enjoying a bad reputation without solemn warnings of the dangers supposed to lie ahead, and on his own responsibility for anything untoward which may occur. Anyway, after a week of entertainment, novelty and luxurious living in Pará, my temper, when solemnly warned for the hundredth time, was none too good; but I was persuaded in a weak moment to agree to a kind of trial of outfit and conditions on the *Isla des Onças*, or Island of Jaguars. To this delectable spot my two half-breed companions, self and baggage were to be transported by a friend who owned one of the many small steam-launches.

This I learned afterwards was a manœuvre to induce me to change my mind and content myself with journeys by steamer up the navigable rivers. The Island of Jaguars is a pictorial paradise, but is famous—and justly so—for the size and voraciousness of its insect life. The two half-breeds whom I had selected as guides would agree to accompany me on the long journey only upon the understanding that they on their part were to be allowed to explore for new rubber forests, which, if discovered, they intended to explore during the following season. This arrangement was the cause of considerable worry to me when civilization had been left far behind.

The purchase of a *batalõe*, or native canoe, with a palm-thatch awning over the stern to afford a certain measure of protection against the Equatorial sun and rain, could not be made until we arrived at Itaituba, about 150 miles up the Tapajós river. The journey from Pará to this outpost of civilization on the fringe of the unknown was to be accomplished in one of the

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small shallow-draught river steamers of the Amazon Navigation Service.

When these preparations had all been completed there followed an unavoidable delay of ten days before the river steamer was due to leave for Itaituba. During this time I had ample opportunities of getting acquainted with Pará and the *Paranese*, and also of camping for three days on the Island of Jaguars to test my waterproof tent and camp equipment, and getting still better acquainted with the inhabitants of the local jungle—those of the flying, buzzing, creeping, crawling and stinging variety.

About Pará I need say but little, because a guide-book account of this tropical city of northern Brazil is outside the province of this story. One very general misconception must, however, be corrected. Pará is not situated on the Amazon proper. It is built upon the low, flat country on the right bank of the river from which it derives its name, and is approximately eighty-two miles from the Equator. The sanitary system of the city has been greatly improved within recent years, and the fevers once so prevalent have now been greatly diminished. Malaria still comes within the category of likely complaints after prolonged residence, but there are scarcely any countries in the world having the advantage of an almost perpetual summer where this illness is unknown. The once dreaded yellow fever has been entirely stamped out, and Pará is now quite a healthy and up-to-date tropical city.

It is a town of electric tramways, a good European hotel, and of morning and afternoon journals, the popularity of these being due largely to the perpetually

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warm atmosphere, especially during midday, which causes a slack feeling to invade the majority of the 100,000 inhabitants until the cool winds, which blow from the sea, setting in about four P.M. and lasting until some time after nightfall, make the last hours of the day preferable for exercise. When darkness has, however, finally closed over the white houses and waving palms the land breeze of the night brings a moist freshness from the great forests to the parched earth and foliage of this beautiful tropical city. The buzz and hum of beetles and insects decreases with the passing of daylight. Fireflies flit about like tiny floating stars against the dark foliage in the Praça da Republica, and in the beautiful but more distant Bosque.

In the bright sunlight of the tropical morning Old Pará, with its narrow streets and coloured houses, is glaring and somewhat listless, but in the more modern quarters there are several nice avenues and squares, with palm-embellished central gardens and statues. The anchorage and quayside are dotted with the ships of many nations and boats of queer design. Near to the river front is the fine Frei Caetano Brandão Square and gardens, prettily laid out with tropical foliage, the broad pathways being planned in circles round the statue of the worthy bishop after whom the square is named. The centre of the social evening life of the city is the Praça da Republica, near to which is situated both the favourite café and theatre, fine stone buildings of classic architecture. This theatre is not open every week, with a change of company, as is usually the case in Europe and the United States, but only at intervals,

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when a travelling concert party or an Italian opera company pay a visit. Drama is seldom seen. The Brazilian, Portuguese, Italian and half-caste population of this city are lovers of the musical. Frequent proof of this is afforded even in the remote settlements and on the rubber estates, where the strains of the viola are usually heard after sundown. The two rendezvous of the English colony are the Club and the boulevard restaurant of the Grand Hotel. Here one may sip iced drinks or dine sumptuously while watching all types of native colouring and humanity promenading in the shade of the giant mangoes.

Many of the buildings of Pará are of modern style. The palace of the governor, the cathedral, the hospital and the private mansions, flanked by broad stone columns and almost covered with creepers and exotic flowers, need no special mention here. The principal residential suburbs are Mosquerio, Chapeo Virado, Nazareth and São Jeronimo. The two latter are in tramway communication with the business portion of the city. Dependent upon the rubber coming in from the forests and plantations on the Lower Amazon, Pará has, during quite recent years, fallen on evil times, but the cultivation of cocoa and other staples, as well as the collection and shipment of Brazil nuts, have, to a certain extent, tended to alleviate the unemployment and suffering at first caused by the remarkable drop in the price of rubber in the markets of the world. Pará rubber is famous all over the world, although it is hard to say why it should be so named, since comparatively little is actually collected in that state. The chief centres of production in Brazil are further up the Amazon, and

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its main tributaries in the great undeveloped state of Amazonas; also very large quantities come from far-off Bolivia and north-eastern Peru, by way of the great sea river.

It was while working on the preliminary synopsis of this book, during a recent visit to Pará, that I renewed my acquaintance with the Rev. Miles Moss, the English chaplain on the Amazon. One of his parishes is at Porto Velho, about 2000 miles distant! Mr Moss is an enthusiastic moth hunter, and has a wonderful collection. He often spends the night in the jungle on a platform erected among the upper branches of a tree, forty-two feet from the ground. Two bright lights are used to attract the insects, and on a dark, wet night thousands of moths, night wasps, flying beetles, praying mantis and flies of every description are attracted to the platform by the rays of light in the tree tops. When the brilliant tropical moon illuminates the dark forest around the results are, however, not so good. Sometimes he has weird visitors, such as monkeys, tree snakes and huge hairy spiders; at others he finds himself amid a small cloud of irritating midges. Mr Moss has made many journeys up and down the Amazon and Madeira rivers, as well as six times visiting the interior of Peru, and has discovered, quite recently, three new specimens of hawk moth (*isognathus*)—one in Pará, one in Manáos, and one in Pernambuco. It was years before, in Lima, Peru, that I first met this able and enthusiastic naturalist.

It was on a lovely tropical night that I sat in the stern of a small launch and saw the waters of the Rio Pará being churned into silvery foam as the tiny vessel

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conveying the two half-breeds (Fernando and Alberto), myself, baggage and camp equipment headed out into the bay towards the mangrove-fringed shore of the *Isla des Onças*. The broad river glistened in the moonlight, and the tepid warmth of the night lent enchantment to the scene. My thoughts wandered, and, as I lay back, caressing my favourite companion, a "commerciale," and gazing at the dark forest stretching away on either side, I began speculating as to the future—the chances of penetrating deep into those forbidding-looking forests, now sharply silhouetted by the yellow light; the unknown sights and experiences which awaited me on remote rivers; the existence of curious and perhaps hostile native tribes; the possibilities of reaching, almost single-handed, areas of forest and swamp still thousands of miles distant.

Although not exactly a novice in travel off the beaten track I confess that, on this night, more than at any other time during the subsequent months of effort and danger, my heart sank, as the lights of the city seemed to grow more distant. The size, loneliness and amazing sea of vegetation and river, which I knew to extend on almost every hand for over 2000 miles, caused a kind of mental depression. The efforts of man seemed suddenly revealed in their true and insignificant proportions compared with the great and impressive vastness of the works of nature. I was appalled at the immensity of the great Amazon forests and rivers.

It would seem probable that a momentary paralysis of the human faculties, caused by a sudden realization of immeasurable solitude, in other lands, has been the real cause of many unexplained tragedies of exploration

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and pioneer work in the vast unpeopled tracts of the world's surface. Amid the winter snows of the Canadian and Alaskan wilds it is common knowledge that men go mad if companionship is too long denied them. On the great Paciencia Plain and the desert of Atacama, in Chile, the human imagination, perturbed by the immense distances, conjures up not only pictures of non-existent objects, but also the weird sounds of voices close at hand. Those who have been found after wandering over the vast and deceptive surfaces of these saharas of the south have either lost their reason or been discovered naked and dead.

These things I knew and speculated upon as we crossed Pará Bay. They are not problems of physical or mental weakness, but a common heritage of civilized humanity, of the same origin as those which cause men to crowd together in the cities, while the vast open spaces of sunshine and freedom are left uncared for, except by the few.

The shadow of the mangroves blotted out the moonlight as the launch dived suddenly into the black abyss of a narrow stream, or igarapé, which crosses the centre of the island. Tall trees rose up like walls of fantastic tangled growth on each side. The stars blinked out, and the light was dim. In a moment we had been transplanted from the light of the outer world of living men into the silent and damp recesses of the great tropical forest. A slight shiver passed down my spine, and I laughed to break the spell. Later on, in the depths of the unknown jungle, I remembered that shiver and the old superstition attaching to it.

CHAPTER III

FROM JAGUAR ISLAND TO THE TAPAJÓS

MY first night in the tropical forest on Jaguar Island was one of torment, the precursor of many similar experiences on remote rivers, and in still more remote jungles, of what has been aptly termed the *visible Equator*. One may search all round the tropical zone but without instruments and mathematical calculations it would be difficult to discover when the zero line of latitude was either being traversed or crossed. The popular conception of the climate and aspect of the lands and seas along the line is often quite erroneous. Glassy seas, blue skies and brilliant sun-glare are by no means always the atmospheric conditions prevailing on the Equator.

The mouth of the Amazon—250 miles of islands and greenish yellow flood—joins the South Atlantic between 10° S. and 10° N. of the Equator, and the seas around are subject to the influence of the N.E. and S.E. trade winds. These often bring with them grey skies and brief afternoon rains. The atmosphere is best described as sticky-hot and damp. A belt of sea more unlike the popular idea of the tropics is difficult to conceive. Then comes a change as the mouth of the Amazon, or Pará river, is approached. A thousand miles away the grey of the north-east trades clears

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slowly away and the exquisite blues of the glassy doldrums take its place. Then the off-shore breeze brings afternoon rains, and the colour of the sea changes from blue to yellowish green, for the Amazon tints the ocean for over a hundred miles.

A low coast of palms rises reluctantly from the horizon, Salinas and the pilot, Pará and its white buildings, the green island of Marajo, and other places, pass as in a midsummer night's dream. All around are the great silent Equatorial forests, and it dawns on the wanderer, without the use of instruments or the employment of geographical knowledge, that here are the tropics of the imagination—the *visible Equator*—and for about 3000 miles this great river follows the centre line of the world's surface.

This, however, is a digression. The launch came to rest alongside the bank, where a small clearing went funnel-like up to the brilliant stars. All around was the black wall of the forest. The oppressive stillness was relieved only by the buzz and hum of myriads of insects. The making of camp is always a tedious process, because it comes after the labours of the day. In the Arctic the cold tightens its grip with the lowering of man's vitality, and in the tropics the heat seems greater because of the darkness, the insects more voracious owing to their invisibility, and the thinnest clothes more sticky and stifling because of the heat and burden of the day. The first camp made with new equipment necessarily takes longer to get ship-shape because, however carefully and scientifically the packing has been done, there is difficulty in finding one or other essential. In this particular instance it was the water-

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proof ground-sheet for the ridge-tent I invariably carry when away from civilization.

Eventually everything was landed from the launch, which throbbed her way painfully down the narrow igarapá towards Pará Bay, leaving the small illuminated tent and our three selves against the black wall of the forest, and in the mysterious stillness of the tropical night. Somewhat fatigued by the effort of making camp and cooking an evening meal in the oppressively hot and damp air of the thick jungle, I lay and smoked in the trestle hammock which was to form my bed for many months to come. In this connection it is interesting to note that the South American method of lying in a hammock is crosswise, with a pillow to support the head. This is the only method that I know of which avoids the cramping effect of sleeping for weeks in a curve, with the head and feet much higher than the remainder of the body. A hammock is preferable to a folding cot, because it is more difficult for the armies of crawling and creeping insects, such as ants, who are the real masters of the Amazon forests, to swarm over the sleeper. Mosquito boots are necessary, and these I had taken the precaution to put on when changing from the somewhat heavy marching kit after making camp. This, however, did not prevent the first two hours of the night from proving anything but restful. Being fresh to the region, new blood caused the mosquitoes to swarm around my neck and wrists. Big moths, attracted by the light in the tent, were also a nuisance until Fernando, with a flash of real genius, carried the little kerosene lamp outside and hung it on a tree a few yards from the camp. Almost instantly the

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insect pests decreased in numbers and ferocity, and the pall-like blackness became so monotonous that sleep was the only alternative.

When I awoke next morning, notwithstanding a patent mosquito net which could be drawn tight while lying in the hammock, my face and wrists were so swollen and sore with the bites and stings that shaving was impossible. Experience on similar occasions had taught me the value of a little pure alcohol applied to the red blotches to relieve the pain and irritation. Being anxious to curtail, as far as possible, this preliminary testing of camp equipment, which is, however, a course to be strongly recommended to all inexperienced travellers before finally leaving civilization, although an exceedingly irritating delay when one is anxious to push on towards the real objective of the expedition, we proceeded to unpack all the equipment landed from the launch on the previous evening, and to go through a complete day's work, including the filling of water bottles and the using of filters, which, incidentally, clear the drinking water, but do not purify it, and necessitate one or two special kettles being carried for boiling purposes.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a deluge of tropical rain soon found the weak spots in our armour against damp. Canvas bags are quite useless, and only become water-logged and terribly heavy even when used to hold articles which do not spoil after being alternately soaked with rain and baked in the sun heat. A waterproof canvas floor to the tent is a luxury not only because of the protection it affords against ants and other ground insects, but also to keep out the damp

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when camping on swampy ground. Camera outfits, when intended for field work, must be of the mahogany, tropical variety, encased in watertight tin cases. Films require to be packed, preferably in rolls of six, in tin canisters with waterproof plaster round the lid to prevent the dampness in the air from finding its way into the tin case. This plaster can be removed when the roll of films is required and used again when the exposed roll is replaced in the canister.

It is a curious fact that sunstroke is unknown in Amazonia, notwithstanding the great heat. Whether this is due to the humidity of the atmosphere or other cause it is difficult to determine. In this connection it is, however, of interest to note that the actinic value of the light, so far as photography is concerned, is abnormally poor for the tropics. Very little detail is obtained in a snapshot. For taking pictures of still life an exposure of six seconds with an aperture well stopped down gives by far the best results. Longer exposures are necessary in the depths of the jungle, even where the light appears to be comparatively good.

This discovery of the low actinic value of the light came as a great surprise, and cost me many spoilt and thin films. A medical man who has studied this subject, and has made many voyages on the Amazon, connects this curious phenomenon with the absence of sunstroke. While it relieves the explorer of the necessity of carrying solar topees, spinal pads, green veils or glasses, it renders amateur photography of native life in the forests or of moving objects, such as birds or beasts, far more difficult, although by no means impossible when a little experience has been gained.

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During the second day on Jaguar Island a glimpse was afforded me of the true character of my half-breed companions. A further twelve hours' stay in our camp there before returning to Pará would have enabled me to carry out some tests regarding the suitability of the lenses fitted specially on my two cameras, and rendered necessary by the discovery of the low photographic value of the light. Although anxious to commence the interesting work ahead it seemed advisable to make quite sure that the chief recording instrument carried by almost every serious traveller was in proper fighting condition. To this delay, however, both the half-breeds objected, on the ground that they were losing valuable time. Had I then realized that with people of mixed races a firm control is essential, if results in travel and exploration are to be obtained, perhaps much personal suffering in the days ahead would have been avoided. On the other hand a few more days spent on this little island would, in all probability, have shown me not only the true character but also the true personal habits of my companions. In which event it is conceivable that I should have agreed to accept them as partners on the long and hazardous journey to the Tapajós Plateau.

It is unnecessary to weary the reader with further details of the return to Pará and the final preparations for the departure of my small expedition. We left the quayside, near the bottom of the Central Avenue, in the little river steamer, with its few small four-berth deck cabins, and headed out, round the numerous forest-clad islands, into that portion of the Pará river which is known as the Bay of Marajo.

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This mouth of the great Amazon was the one first discovered by the early navigators, and was called "Sweet Water Sea." It is here that vessels now plying on this immense river fill their tanks, as the water is fresh and quite fit for drinking when passed through filters. Some hours after darkness had closed over the vast silent waters and distant forests we passed the mouth of the Tocantins river and entered the Amazon proper.

What happened during the succeeding fourteen hours is shrouded in mystery. Whether it was the comparative comfort of the small cabin, of which I had been given the exclusive use, owing to the kindness of officials and others at Pará, or the cool breeze from the open river, here very broad, after the nights of torment on Jaguar Island, cannot be accurately stated, but I slept so soundly that I missed the little breakfast of fish and fruit served on the aft deck, and was forced to content myself with black coffee and biscuits until lunch-time.

We were now in the famous Narrows of the Amazon. Here the thousand forest-clad islands crowd so closely that the swift-running stream is often less than 200 yards wide—a contrast to the thirty miles opposite Pará. Every turn and twist of the yellow flood in its passage between the green isles reveals scenes of great tropical beauty. The delicate *assai* palm mingles its feathery fronds with the leaves of countless other varieties of trees, lianas hang in loops and festoons from the lofty branches of the forest giants. Great buttressed roots rise up from out of the pit of lesser growth, and in the glades and small igarapés, or creeks,

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the brilliant tropical sun-glare is reduced to a dim green twilight.

Here and there the palm-thatch dwellings of *caboclos*, or half-Indian rubber gatherers, stand on thin poles above the flooded banks. These crude huts seem overshadowed by the great Equatorial forest; and the poverty of the river families is often pitiable. The naked children, playing in the crude dug-out canoes, which form the only means of transport, as even walking is denied by the thick jungle, exhibit all the signs of bad feeding. Farina is the principal food, and this causes distension of the stomach combined with anæmia. It is said that ninety per cent. of these children have either hook-worm, malaria or anæmia. Fish caught in the river and fruit obtained from the forest make up the only other foods of this curious race of Indian-cum-Portuguese who inhabit the banks of nearly all accessible Amazonian rivers. There are along the banks of the Narrows many Indians who are the semi-civilized descendants of the once great Tupi nation. They can be distinguished from the *caboclos* by their short stature, brown skins and square muscular frames. They speak the "Lingoa Geral," or language which forms the medium of communication between the Portuguese, the *caboclos* and the Indians. It is a corruption of the Tupi dialect. These natives are grouped in families, and have a curiously elaborate code of relationship. Cousins are unknown, and all the grandchildren of one grandfather are brothers and sisters!

The women, both *caboclo* and Indian, either go about semi-naked or dressed in brilliant red skirts,

SEMI-CIVILISED INDIAN WOMEN MAKING FARINA.



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and the men seldom wear more than a pair of dirty drawers and a straw hat. Their palm-thatch huts, built on poles above the yellow river, with the great forest blotting out the sky above, are dismal affairs, consisting of one small room almost devoid of furniture, and even cooking utensils—the only apparent articles being a reed hammock and a few earthenware pots. The principal portion of the day is spent on the platform of poles which surrounds the single apartment.

Now and again these queer people gather together for a dance, which often takes place in the evening by the weird light of a bonfire. A slow and barbaric dirge, with much repetition, is chanted by the older people, and is accompanied by the shaking of boxes of dried beans. The young *caboclos* then commence a slow shuffling of the feet and wriggling of the body, which is neither graceful nor artistic. When seen in the depths of the great forest, or on some moonlit beach, with the dark and silent river in front and the black wall of jungle behind, accentuating the red glow of the wood fire, the slow-moving, shadowy figures and the rhythmic rattle of the bean-boxes, it is not only weird but barbaric in the extreme.

During the last days of June in each year these *caboclos* celebrate the festival of S. Juan (St John the Baptist). There are dances and curious ceremonies, which culminate in a curious carnival on the night of the 24th. Almost every family, scattered far and wide over the 20,000 miles of navigable river, make a bonfire, and have a scented bath at midnight. Those who congregate in the many small settlements along the banks of the network of rivers decorate themselves to

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represent bulls, with headdresses and horns, and wild Indians, with toucan feathers, bows and arrows. Barbaric music and dancing occupy the hours between sunset and midnight, then comes the scented bath.

Outside almost every *caboclo* hut one sees, on the raised platform above the river and swamp, herbs growing in earthenware pots. These are used for scenting the bath on this great festival of the half-breeds who form a thin fringe of semi-civilization along the banks of many of the navigable and frequented Amazonian rivers. They are a good-natured and harmless people, although occasionally the quick temper of the Indian results in a duel with knives.

Although the palm-thatch huts of these river-folk are nearly always built on piles, because of the rising of the rivers, they frequently spend days on the roof during unusually heavy floods. Those seen on the banks in the Narrows are mostly *Cearaetze*, or inhabitants of the state of Ceara, who have been compulsorily deported from this desert-like region during a period of drought, and brought into the damp, Equatorial forests of the Lower Amazon. They are comparatively fair-skinned, and often have yellow hair, while those on the Upper Amazon, and on the more remote rivers, are darker skinned, and more closely resemble the civilized Indian. It is, however, impossible to generalise because negroes—freed slaves and their descendants—are numerous, and the mixing of the different races has produced some curiosities in both colour and type.

When the 130 miles of the Narrows have been passed one sees but little sign of life on the dense forest-covered banks. Owing to the gloom beneath

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the giant trees dry land is seldom seen, and this, to some extent, accounts for the absence of fauna. Occasionally the stillness of the tropical night is broken by the distant howl of an onça, or the din made by an awakened colony of howling monkeys. In the early mornings, before the thin white mist has cleared from the river and jungle, the screech of parrots and the chattering of monkeys can, however, more frequently be heard when out on the broad river.

Close to the bank parrots, macaws, egrets, cormorants and ducks are often seen flying between their feeding grounds and roosting places. The movement of the steamer at times disturbs a kingfisher or a heron, and occasionally one sees the hoatzins, living representatives of the intermediate stage between the pterodactyle and the bird. Monster fish, with bull-dog jaws and bulging eyes, rise up from the yellow depths for refuse from the galley; and high above the lofty forest trees may be seen the clumsy flight of the black vulture-like urubus, and the slow circling of the Amazonian eagle. River dolphins occasionally break the shining surface, and, at low river season, an alligator, basking in the noon sun, is a common sight.

Towards the head-waters of the more remote Amazons alligators are so numerous as to form an ever-present danger, and there are also the cannibal fish known as the piranha, about which more will be said in later pages.

On the river road to the Tapajós Plateau I had not been sufficiently long in Amazonia to know the bitter truth of the assertion, "behind every leaf an insect, in every flower at least one ant." I had heard the almost

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incessant sex call of the beetle, the chirp of a kind of cricket, the buzz and hum of innumerable insects, but had not seen wasps' nests as large as coconuts, armies of sauba ants, bushes covered with moquins, those irritating insects which, in hundreds, burrow under the skin of man as he passes through the thick forest. Nor was I fully acquainted with the nightly activity of jiggers, fleas, sandflies and immense spiders, some with the deadly red cross on their repulsive backs. Of snakes I had seen a few in various parts of South America, but these were nothing compared with those afterwards encountered in the swamps of the Madeira. So, when the little river steamer made up her mind to wait some hours at Santarem, the pretty little settlement at the mouth of the Tapajós, I went into the town and jungle around to improve my neglected education.

The meeting of the dark green water of the Tapajós with the yellow flood of the Amazon, opposite Santarem, affords a curious sight. The waters do not mix, but remain in patches of colour, forming miniature whirlpools over an immense expanse of mottled river. The land on both banks at the mouth of this fine tributary is formed by imposing, forest-covered cliffs and hills. Gleams of red sandstone appear from among the mass of dark green matted vegetation. Palms of many varieties are thick in the lower jungles, but higher up, on the dry ground, the trees become forest giants, and the undergrowth is less.

If this had been all I learned while wandering around Santarem it would have saved me several hours of misery. However, once bitten by moquins!—and the remedy is cacash, a cheap fiery native spirit in which

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one can, fortunately, well afford to bathe. It relieves mosquito bites and the irritation caused by the hundreds of different species of minute parasites—about which, it is said, more bad language is used by new-comers to the Amazon forests than about any other of the numerous forms of torment. Happily the river is free and cool.

When the sun went down in a typical setting of brilliant yellow, carmine and purple cloud, tinting the placid river, the palms, the cliffs and the white bungallows with its gold and crimson, the now violet waters of the Tapajós were being churned into pink foam, and between the lighting of a cigar and the fall of the first ash the fires of day had died in the west, and the lights of Santarem were blotted out by the dark wall of the tropical forest.

After leaving Santarem the river is a broad estuary, about nine miles across, which runs southward toward the heart of the continent. During the next fifty miles the stream narrows gradually until, at the small settlement of Aveiros, it is less than two miles broad. Shortly after dawn the steamer called at a *barraca*, or store, situated about sixty miles up-stream, in order to replenish the supplies of wood fuel. The small logs were stacked on a rickety platform raised above the dark green water close alongside the bank. All river navigation in Amazonia, except that accomplished by *batalõe*, or canoe, is carried on with the aid of wood fuel from the surrounding forests. The trees are cut by *caboclo* rubber or Brazil nut gatherers, and sold to the steamers at the *barracas*. Here is also stored the produce brought from the forests to the rivers for export. These low

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buildings, with their piles of wood, form a characteristic scene on all the more frequented Amazonian rivers. They mark the known from the unknown routes. Where there are no *barracas* only canoes can be successfully employed for exploration purposes.

A few years ago some inexperienced travellers arrived on the threshold of a remote region in Brazilian Guiana with an elaborately equipped motor-launch, brought from the outside world on the deck of a cargo steamer. Needless to say, they were unable to go more than about 200 miles from their base of petrol supplies; and this in a region where a canoe journey of 1000 miles is looked upon as nothing very unusual!

When seen from the deck of a steamer the waters of the Tapajós appear to be of a bottle-green colour, but, while taking aboard fuel at the *barraca*, I seized the opportunity to test this curious river water in a glass, and also under the microscope. It then looked as clear as crystal, with but little floating vegetable matter, a striking contrast to the ooze-like and yellow-brown water of the Amazon itself. While the lower reaches of this river are fine and broad, and the banks often rise to a considerable height, showing red cliffs between the forests of giant trees, steam navigation extends only some 150 miles from the mouth, at Santarem, to a collection of adobe houses and huts ambitiously called Itaituba. Beyond this point the river is broken by several series of dangerous rapids, and the country around is only semi-explored, although Franco, Wickham and Rondon ascended it for several hundred miles at different times during the past century.

The absence of any other mode of transport made

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necessary the purchase of a large canoe, or batalõe, at Itaituba; and, when the little steamer nosed her way in towards the bank at this "port," I made haste to find the dusky officials for whom letters of introduction with instructions had been given to me at Pará. Closer acquaintance with the few dilapidated stores and adobe huts of this place made me more determined than ever to avoid spending the night there if possible.

Alas for the plans of man in this mysterious region of Equatorial forest—and storms! Scarcely had the sun dipped below the line of trees before the whole sky blazed with electric flashes. For three hours this fierce storm raged without the faintest rumble of thunder or the patter of rain. It just lightened incessantly, blindingly! Vivid flashes of sheet and fork, without sound—and even the forest and river seemed to hold their breath in awe.

Fortunately we had not yet unloaded our stores and equipment, and were sleeping aboard the steamer that night. Itaituba has nothing in the way of accommodation to offer the chance traveller, either privately or publicly, beyond a hammock and a shed. It has a population of about 500, and is noteworthy only on account of its being the place where Mr Wickham stayed when in quest of the seeds which founded the rubber industry of Malaya. Towards midnight the rain came and the lightning ceased. A deluge which hissed and roared found its way through the cracked and overheated decks, and in the twenty minutes of its duration awoke everyone aboard and drowned two chickens tied to a stanchion on the tiny well deck.

The following morning was brilliantly fine, although

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oppressively hot, and I succeeded, much sooner than was anticipated, in obtaining a batalõe for the not unreasonable sum of £15. The late owner of this queer, unpainted craft told me that rain such as that of the previous night was very unusual during this time of the year, except between three and four every afternoon! Appointments are made, on the Lower Amazon and its tributaries, for either "before" or "after" the daily rain. In some places it occurs about noon, and at others an hour or so later. It seldom lasts more than a few minutes, except during the height of the rainy season, in January, February and March.

Months later I experienced what travelling on unknown rivers and through swampy forests during the wet season really meant, and never wish to repeat the performance. However, I could not have chosen a better time for my first long plunge into the Amazonian wilderness, for it was the second week in May, and the dry season, with the essential difference that although it rained almost every day, it did not rain all day!

CHAPTER IV

THE MUNDURUCUS OF THE FOREST PLATEAU

FROM Itaituba onward the Tapajós river was almost unexplored, for at this point steam navigation ceases, and the uncharted waters address themselves in earnest to the great unknown interior. Having transferred our baggage, food supplies and camp equipment from the river steamer into the batalõe we left the small but quaint little settlement, which is situated about 150 miles from the mouth of the Tapajós, on 14th May, and within a few hours, after passing a place called Itapeu, all signs of civilization had been left behind.

Although dense forests of giant trees lined portions of the bank on both sides, steep red sandstone cliffs and jungle-covered hills rose up in the background, especially to the south-west. This was the beginning of the little-known Tapajós Plateau, which extends over a vast area: westwards to the valley of the Madeira river, and southwards merges into the plateau of Matto Grosso, in the interior of the continent. It is never inundated. Later explorations revealed this low plateau, which averages about 800 feet above sea-level, as one vast forest of giant trees heavily interlaced with the sipo, or murder vine. The undergrowth is, however, much less than might be supposed compared with that in the low river valleys.

The Mundurucus of the

For mile after mile the canoe either glided peacefully up the still broad river or was dragged and poled through rapids, such as those near Bella Vista and São Luis, which is the absolute terminus of steam communication, as directly above this little place of no account the river is completely blocked by both rocks and rapids. The hours spent in the cramping positions alone possible in a heavily laden batalõe were prevented from becoming intolerably monotonous by the sharp rocks which in certain places rose abruptly out of the water. Around these, whirlpools of considerable velocity were formed. For one thing, however, I was profoundly grateful, and that was an absence of those swarms of insects which on some Amazonian rivers make the sweltering days one long torment and the nights equally hideous. Against this advantage had to be placed the indescribably filthy habits of my half-breed companions. It was my first experience of travelling alone in a savage country with men of mixed races, whose only vocabulary, beyond the local half-Brazilian half-Indian patois, consisted of not more than fifty words of queer English picked up while serving as deck hands on vessels of the old Amazon Steam Navigation Company.

On 23rd May, the seventh day after portaging the Apuê Falls, which are really a series of rapids formed by the contraction of the river between rocky banks in a wild and apparently desolate country, we sighted some Indians on a small sandy beach of the western bank. Being desirous of obtaining the services of a guide who understood the peculiarities and dangers of the river ahead, the bow of the canoe was turned

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shorewards. Almost instantly the bronze-coloured figures disappeared into the thick bush, and although presents, in the form of a shining brass bangle and some strings of beads, were placed on the beach and the canoe refloated the Indians failed to appear. After waiting two hours the canoe was again beached, as it was considered unwise to lose the presents from the limited supply available without obtaining a guide. Scarcely had the coveted bangle and beads been again stowed inboard before an arrow whizzed overhead, and no time was lost in getting back into mid-stream.

By dead reckoning we had covered some 140 miles from the first series of rapids which effectually bar steam navigation on the upper reaches of this fine river. Our average rate of progress was thus about two miles an hour; due, partly, to the time occupied in dragging the heavily laden canoe through foaming waters, often waist deep in the flood, or round obstructions on dry land, and also to the previous rains farther up country, which caused an unusually strong current to flow continuously against us.

The river banks in several places had become submerged. During high-water season, towards the end of June, there are flooded areas over seven miles wide and thirty miles long, caused by the volume of water passing down the Amazon itself holding back the floods of its tributaries. The navigation of these immense lakes, during our retreat down the Tapajós some time later, was by no means either safe or easy of accomplishment, owing to the floating logs and other obstructions.

The usual afternoon deluge of rain which had

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occurred since the start of the expedition did not take place on 25th May, and, about three o'clock, a tiny black spot appeared in the centre of the broad, shining river far ahead. At first it was thought to be an unusually large log, but soon paddles could be seen flashing in the sunlight, and our excitement became intense. The batalõe was coming down-stream with the current, and in less than fifteen minutes was abreast of us. The two boats were manœuvred close together in mid-stream, and my surprise can be imagined when I found another white traveller in this remote region.

Dr Cabral, a keen collector and explorer in the Amazon Valley, had spent some weeks on the Upper Tapajós, reaching a point about 160 miles beyond where we met, and above the great rapids which divide this river into two sections. His batalõe was heavily laden with specimens collected from this wonderful region, and he was returning to civilization with the fruits of his labours. This intrepid traveller, who, at that time, had lived in Amazonia for over ten years, has, so I have been informed quite recently, died of fever, at a tiny settlement on the Peruvian frontier. Many of the specimens he collected can be seen in the museums of Pará, Rio and São Paulo. To him I am indebted for some of the information given here regarding the customs of the Mundurucus.

This was my first meeting with this extraordinary man; subsequently I had the privilege of spending several days in his interesting company during an enforced period of idleness in Manáos. Endowed with a wonderfully strong constitution in a very thin but wiry frame, and a considerable scientific knowledge

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beyond that of the ordinary physician, he had wandered thousands of miles, either alone or with native tribes, along the silent river and jungle paths of this million-mile wilderness—always completely absorbed in the work of adding new specimens to his vast collection of Amazonian flora and fauna. Although *persona grata* with many of the wild tribes of the remote rivers and forests on account of the relief he brought to their aches and pains, he, nevertheless, more than once nearly fell a victim to their inherent distrust of the white man—on one occasion being poisoned by a tribe of Conibos Indians on the banks of the Ucayali, and on another being held captive, with the threat of torture and death, in the *maloccas* of a family of Nambiquaras on the Juruena, pending the recovery of a chief.

Dr Cabral resisted my persuasions to camp for the night on the bank near where we met: had it been later in the working day I might perhaps have succeeded. He gave me certain information regarding the headwaters of the Tapajós, far beyond our own objective, and this data I have included in the sketch-map reproduced in this volume. After an hour's conversation in broken English and bad Portuguese, while the two canoes were paddled inshore and secured to an overhanging tree, we watched the batalõe of this great traveller disappear in the tropical mist. Months later I met a member of the famous Indian Service of Brazil in very similar circumstances, and at a very opportune moment—but that is another story.

As each day of our voyage up the Tapajós passed, with only slow progress to show for considerable effort,

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my anxiety increased because of the dwindling supply of civilized food, not easily replenished on any Amazonian river. I knew that my half-breed companions often existed for weeks upon fruit and reptiles, and would push on in the attempt to find new rubber forests, and a passage to the Madeira river by way of the little Martinho, regardless of the diet, and possible sufferings from the scourge of these regions, the deficiency disease called *beri-beri*. Being new to the country, reptiles as food were peculiarly repulsive to me. I had never, then, eaten tortoise, monkey, lizard or beetle. Some months later I tried all of these repulsive dishes except the beetle, but never succeeded in swallowing more than a few mouthfuls, with the single exception of tortoise, which is considered a delicacy when journeying in Amazonia.

It was about 189 miles from the Apu  Falls that, on the morning of 28th May, we came upon an Indian village standing on the edge of an *igarap *, and succeeded, after distributing presents, in allaying the suspicion with which all travellers appear to be regarded by the Amazonian Indians. These river dwellers turned out to be a family of Mundurucus. They were totally unclothed with the exception of a tiny apron, and were of a deep bronze colour. Their *maloccas* were erections of leaves and branches, resembling gigantic beehives. The women appear to do all the work, while the men either go off into the forest to hunt, or laze about fashioning spears, bows and arrows, or drinking a curious concoction, made principally of *mandioca*, out of large cups. They are quite docile.

It would appear that only those who have been

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elaborately tattooed are allowed to marry, and that when a boy reaches a certain age, which I should judge to be about fourteen years, he is forcibly ornamented in this way. On our third night among these natives, when the moon topped the line of ghostly black trees, flooding the broad river with silvery light, the sound of a kind of tom-tom, which I afterwards discovered was caused by the blows of a stick on a hollow tree trunk, called the *manguaré*, caused me to hurry from the little ridge-tent erected on the river bank. A group of Indians were squatting on the ground, while two of their number held a very scared-looking boy in their midst. The medicine man, who also appeared to hold the office of high priest, was reciting something in a monotonous undertone while stirring with both hands in an earthenware jar. Presently the women clapped their hands, stamped their feet and chanted. The naked youngster was laid on the ground. The medicine man approached and commenced tattooing the lad's body with brilliant red dye made from the seeds of the *achiote* (*Bixa Orellana*) which, at first, in the rays of the moon, appeared to be blood.

Although the contortions of the boy's body showed that he was suffering when the bunch of palm needles, with which the operation was performed, entered his flesh, no sound escaped his lips. For over an hour the tattooing continued, then a wild cry from the women signalled the conclusion of the ceremony. The boy rose to his feet, and was handed a bow, arrows and a spear. A young girl was then dragged within the circle, a pretence of reluctance being made, which was, apparently, overcome by a grotesque exhibition of force

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and bravado by the young brave, who now bore, in addition to several slashes and dots, a small blood-red alligator on his breast. Taking her by the hair of the head he led her towards a newly made hut, but when near to the low entrance allowed her to escape, catching her again when she ran away. This time he led her into the circle of squatting natives, having apparently overcome her resistance and compelled docility.

How long this ceremony would have lasted cannot be told, because at that moment heavy black clouds rolled across the moon, plunging the forest and river into Cimmerian darkness. Almost instantly the patter of rain on leaves sent me groping towards the tent, only dimly visible although less than twenty yards distant. The hiss of the rain soon increased to a loud roar. Vivid flashes of lightning lit up the dark recesses of the jungle, and thunder rolled across the waters. Within half-an-hour the storm had passed and a white curling mist arose from the rank vegetation. It is at times like this that a strong dose of quinine and a waterproof sleeping bag are necessary for the white traveller in the Amazon forests.

The Mundurucus are one of the most numerous and widely scattered tribes of the Amazon Valley. In 1788 they vanquished their hereditary enemies, the Muras, in a big battle in the forests of the Tapajós-Madeira Plateau. Some of these tribes have been at peace with white men for over a hundred years, while others, in the depths of the forest, are still unknown. When one of these Indians is hopelessly ill the relatives put the sufferer out of his misery; and children often dispatch their parents into the next world in this



CARIPUNA INDIANS IN A DIG-OUT ON THE MUTTA-PARANÁ.

This trail even is simply a hollow tree trunk with open ends.

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summary manner, when, through age and infirmity, they can no longer enjoy active life. Many of these tribes are still very warlike, and are known by sub-tribal names, such as the Guaribos, or Monkey Indians. They speak the Tupi dialect, and, from their methods of training the young, are known as the Spartans of the Amazon. They are called by other surrounding tribes *Paiguize* (head-hunters). This, however, now refers only to those living in the distant, unexplored forest.

On the following morning we continued our journey towards the Falls of the Upper Tapajós. Before leaving the Indian village, however, I succeeded in shooting an alligator, which was eagerly skinned and cut up by the Mundurucus, who use the flesh in a variety of ways. Parts of this reptile are eaten as a delicacy; the fat is used as a lubricant for the massage employed for all ailments, and the teeth are strung together by the women and worn as necklaces.

The forest walls closed in on the river and for several days scarcely a glimpse was obtained of the country beyond. One night we camped on the eastern bank at a point where the main stream contracts and a small river joins its waters with those of the Tapajós. Anxious to determine our exact position in this vast and seemingly deserted region, I searched among my notebooks for any information on the point given by other travellers. Finding no mention of it (so far as I had noted) either by Wickham or Herbert Smith, who ascended the Tapajós river in 1878, nor upon English maps, it seemed to be one of the many small unnamed streams of this wild land.

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Here must be mentioned the difficulty not only of placing and recognizing any given river in the maze of Amazonian waterways without some characteristic landmark, but also of constructing anything like a reliable route-map so that one traveller may benefit by the work of his predecessors. This is, perhaps, one of the great difficulties of exploring on the remote Amazons. Practically nothing exists in the way of systematic observation, because those who have visited these parts were not equipped with instruments, nor could they have carried them even if the necessary scientific apparatus had been available. The absence of native carriers, and the consequent necessity of reducing impedimenta to a minimum, renders much of the work done useless for geographical purposes. What has been accomplished in Amazonia is the result, almost entirely, of individual and mostly isolated effort, under conditions to which African exploration has been merely child's play.

Similar considerations pertain to the recognition of the different tribes. There are probably some 400 native races living in the million square miles of unknown country surrounding the head-waters of the remote Amazons. All of these races dwell in small family groups, which are constantly being split up by the smallest dispute, intermixed by marriage, scattered by the treatment meted out to them by rubber gatherers, especially beyond the Brazilian frontier, and decimated by internecine warfare. Many of them are nomadic, and the sparseness of the population enables these family groups to move about and hunt freely without restrictions imposed by neighbouring tribes. Added

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to this must be the confusion caused by a veritable multitude of tribal, sub-tribal, Portuguese, phonetic and generic names, so that to attempt any classification is quite hopeless. The most that can be done is an intelligent observation and deduction by explorers who penetrate into one or more portions of this incomprehensibly vast region of dense, dim forests, maze of rivers, floods, rapids and wide, open *campos*, inhabited by mysterious Indian tribes, many of whom do not even know of the existence of white men, as will be seen in later pages. Throughout this work the tribal names given will be those by which the various native races are known in the regions they inhabit.

When at last, on the evening of 28th May, the main stream of the Tapajós was left behind, in latitude $8^{\circ} 6'S.$, and the small River Martinho entered, progress became faster, because of the slackening of the head current. Here, however, a new difficulty arose. Every few miles the narrow and shallow stream was blocked by fallen trees and branches. On one such obstruction six hours of hard work only served to clear a passage for the canoe, which could not be unloaded and hauled round because of the swampy nature of the banks and the thick undergrowth. After two days in this river it became quite apparent that no junction with that great fluvial highway the Madeira river, lying 300 miles to the west-south-west, could be effected; not only because of the rapidly declining food supply—although augmented almost daily from the river and forest—but on account of the low range of hills which could be seen lying across the track of the river ahead. The current increased in velocity, and the stream narrowed

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so that the forest, in many parts, met overhead. Poling was the only method by which progress became possible.

It was with great reluctance that, on 31st May, when camp had been made in a small clearing through which the sun could scarcely penetrate, we came to the decision that an advance to the Madeira was impossible. The Martinho evidently rises in these low hills, lying across the trail some twenty miles distant, and visible, through binoculars, as a forest-covered range of irregular shape about 1000 feet high. It had been hoped that this river joined the Gy-Paraná (or Machado), a tributary of the Madeira, which enters the latter stream near the settlement of Humaitá. This discovery caused considerable anxiety because of the low state of the food supply, and the 300 miles of uncivilized country through which the retreat down the Tapajós, to Itaituba, would now have to be conducted.

The situation was, however, relieved in a remarkable manner. The hard work of poling the canoe against the stream, combined with the clearing away of jammed logs and sudd, had exhausted all three of us, and, as it was vitally necessary to commence the journey down-stream, fortunately with the current, as soon as possible, a good night's rest was important; but a guard over the canoe and camp had to be maintained throughout the hours of darkness, and for this duty I volunteered, because my mediocre abilities in the canoe would not be of much service when racing down-stream, and consequently I could rest while progress was being made next day.

Within half-an-hour of sunset, which on this par-

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ticular evening was of peculiar brilliancy, but showed only by reflection in a variety of colours on the centre of the river, darkness began to close in, and the forest at our backs lapsed into a disconcerting stillness. During the daylight hours the chatter of monkeys, the call of parakeets, the whistle of a very common variety of small red bird, the howl of a jaguar, the murderous tail-whisks of an irritable alligator, and the drone of insects, made the wilderness less apparent. Even a glimpse of the starry sky or a ray of moonlight serves to dispel the gloom of night in the Equatorial forest; and in previous camps on the Tapajós one or other of these friendly phenomena had been present, owing to the breadth of the river.

The tree boles, some of which were fully ten feet in diameter, rose up in straight columns to a height of forty to sixty feet, and were grotesquely buttressed. One of these, against which the camp had been pitched, was a giant itauba (*Acrodiclidium itauba*), a very hard wood which rarely rots, and is consequently more likely to be free from the myriads of insects which often invade an ill-chosen camping place. The plumes of mitrity palms drooped down from the dim green vault. Lianas coiled round the trunks like cables, and hung from the branches in loops and tangles. The sipo vine, or "murder liana," clung to the trees which were its victims, and across the tiny clearing a grey, rotting trunk, hollowed by the ants, lay stark above the crushed undergrowth, a witness to their deadly activities. The atmosphere was rank and stagnant, with a damp chilliness after the great heat of the day. As the gloom increased the scene resembled the nave of a cathedral

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at night, with numberless pillars rising from the blackness below and fading into the blackness above.

The complete darkness was relieved only by a steely bar of light thrown by the moon on to the centre of the swift-running river. Only once during the long night did a sound break the unearthly stillness of this central wilderness of tropical growth. Every nerve quivered because of its unexpected nature. A sharp and peculiarly penetrating cry, which, at first, sounded almost human, came from a near-by glade, but search was impossible. To have wandered even a few yards in the tangled forest around would have meant certain death, so the origin of the cry remains unknown. Probably some denizen of the jungle had been caught in the coils of an anaconda, or the jaws of an awakened alligator.

It may seem peculiar that no effort was made to solve the mystery of this cry from the depths of the forest. It should, however, be explained that, in addition to the impossibility of searching amid thick jungle during the hours of darkness, several species of monkey, especially the *simis mycetes*, or howling tribe, make weird and almost human noises which can be heard for great distances. In later travels I became more or less accustomed to sudden and unearthly shrieks during the night hush of the forest wilderness, as a certain species of bird also makes a half-human cry.

With the first pale lemon streaks of the new day came a scanty meal and hasty preparation for departure. While these were in progress the rhythmic beat of paddles accompanied by guttural cries came from up-

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stream. Almost before the rifle could be unstrapped from the empty biscuit tin, to which it had been secured for safety in case of a capsize while in mid-stream, a canoe, filled with naked savages, rounded the bend in the river.

CHAPTER V

IN THE LAND OF THE APIACÁS

THE astonishment of the Indians was evidently far greater than our own, and their rough hollowed log, with no pretence at shape or stability, almost capsized. Powerless to stay progress, in the swift current the craft drifted down-stream, and would have passed the camping place had there not been a mass of floating obstructions in the river, those which had given the *coup de grâce* to our own endeavours on the previous day. The frantic effort of the Indians to prevent a collision, and, at the same time, to avoid landing in our midst, would have been humorous if the thought of alligators had not been uppermost in mind. As it was, the unmanageable dug-out drifted broadside on to the floating debris, and, after some persuasion, by means of signs of friendship involving a grotesque display of throwing away our weapons, the Indian, his three women-folk and children, landed on the only available piece of solid land near by.

Curiosity on the part of the women soon overcame the natural timidity of these savages. Within half-an-hour they had examined everything in the camp and, unfortunately, turned their attention upon myself. It began when I rolled up my shirt sleeves. First they looked dubiously at my face, and made signs for me to wash it in the river; then they pinched my arms, and

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would have liked to satisfy their abnormal curiosity regarding my exact shade in various ways, which, however, I flatly declined to accede to, seeking to distract their attention by giving them presents. This produced a perfect frenzy of joy. The father of this family, who had so far held aloof, probably having seen white men many times before, although keeping his women-folk in the seclusion of the forest, now grinned eagerly. Throwing themselves into the muddy river, regardless of possible alligators, they laughed, cried and rolled in the mud, then, without attempting to cleanse themselves, they set about making camp, while their lord and master was being informed as to the state of our larder.

These Apiacá women soon made a rough shelter of palm fronds and twigs plastered with mud. Of cooking utensils they seemed to have none, with the exception of a crude earthenware pan. When the man, who was the only one clothed, had promised to hunt and replenish our supply of game and fish, we decided to remain in camp for several days before attempting the journey down the Tapajós to Itaituba, and all there is of civilization on the main stream of the Amazon.

It appeared that the women had seldom seen white men, although they had evidently met half-caste rubber gatherers, who are, however, neither white nor black, but usually a sickly yellowish brown in face as well as body. They made signs of inquiry as to our purpose in this remote region by pretending to tap a giant rubber-tree, with which these forests abound, and seemed puzzled when I shook my head. I could not, of course, explain by signs my own mission, and did not

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desire to enlighten them as to that of my companions, contenting myself with what were intended to be reassuring gestures. I knew that the timidity of all the tribes of the forests wherein rubber-trees grow in Amazonia is due mainly to the barbarous treatment meted out to them in the past by unscrupulous rubber gatherers, who not only compelled them, under penalty of flogging, to collect the precious latex, but also committed unnameable outrages on their women-folk.

With the establishment of friendship came the exchange of confidences. These Indians belonged to a village situated some leagues from the river bank, and had never been conquered by the slave-raiding parties from the rubber estates, who made periodic drives before the Brazilian Government instituted an Indian Protection Service, about which more will be said in later pages.

The Apiacás inhabit an area of about 200 square miles of forest on both banks of the Tapajós, and also along the lower Rio Manoel. They speak the Tupi language, and have much in common with tribes met later in the Madeira and Aripuanan valleys. They are somewhat treacherous, and resist all encroachments by white men, but have not given the same amount of trouble as the Parintintins of the Gy-Paraná and Maicy. None of these Indians wears the labret, or ornament of shell or bone inserted into the lip. The women were completely nude except for a thin grass apron, and they wore anklets, which would appear to signify that they are either married or are marriageable. A widow who is too old to obtain another husband cuts off both anklets as a sign that she submits to her condition.

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If one anklet is cut off it means that she is ready to marry again, but, so far as I could ascertain—with the natural limit which signs, drawings and mimicry place in the way of a full exchange of information—if two anklets are not worn by a married woman it means that she has either been unfaithful or has married against the wishes of her tribe.

The Apiacás, like many other native races in the Amazon region, wear their hair, which is glossy black, cut in a short fringe in front and long at the back. Both men, women and children are bobbed in this way. The amulets worn on both arms are made either of bone or fibre, and are used as charms to ward off the dangers of the forest. The children wore no clothes whatever, and appeared to be very healthy and sturdy youngsters. The boy, whom I judged to be about twelve, possessed the thin body strap and fibre bag which is used to prevent injury when passing through the thick undergrowth of the jungle. The father of this bronze family wore both coat and trousers of coarse native cloth, and was armed with an old shotgun, which, however, he did not use for hunting, preferring the finely carved spear which eventually joined my collection in return for a good Swedish pocket-knife. He had seen white men on the river bank, and appeared to have far more distrust of them than his women-folk, who were happy in their ignorance.

It was not until the second day of their stay in the camp that I noticed one of the women take a drinking utensil out of the canoe in order to fill it with water from the river. After a few minutes I succeeded in obtaining a close view of this cup, and must confess to

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a slight shiver of repulsion. It was a human skull, with the sockets of eyes, nose and ears plugged up with dirty red clay.

Conversation did not progress very rapidly because it had to be carried on by signs, and when I tried to find out the origin of this gruesome relic the effect produced was a little disconcerting. Evidently it was a prized trophy of battle and a source of pride to its possessor. The woman being interrogated went through a kind of mimic battle, ending up by seizing the naked child who had been watching, and pretending to cut off the boy's head with a sharp knife made of fish bone. The child's cries brought the father to the rescue armed with a murderous-looking spear, decorated with tufts of birds' feathers. Evidently the Apiacás have a sense of humour, for he grinned when the cause of the screams was explained to him.

That night a turtle hunt was organized on a succession of sand-bars in the river above the camp. It was a weird affair in which even the women joined. Torches made of resinous wood were lighted, and the canoes piloted up to the low mudflats. The flames cast a lurid light on the surrounding forest walls and the silent but swiftly moving black flood. It was not the egg-laying season, so the turtles were found in the shallow water of the bars, where they were safe from the voracious alligators, and also from the marauding jaguars. So dexterous was the native with his long thin spear that three of the smaller variety, called *tracajaas*, were impaled in less than half-an-hour. Subsequently, on other Amazonian waterways, I saw these creatures harpooned, lassoed, trapped and robbed of their eggs.

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That night, somehow, the forest did not seem so lonely, and I sat up over a fire, although the night was warm, trying to extract information upon the customs and beliefs of the Apiacás from a very sleepy member of this so-called fierce tribe. All the satisfaction obtained was the information that the heads of enemies killed in battle were removed from the bodies as trophies of war, but that this custom had been stopped quite recently by the Administrator at the Bocca S. Manoel. The Apiacás believe that the spirits of the departed are reborn in the form of birds or animals, the species being those they most represent by their manners on earth, and that the moon is an evil spirit whose satellites infest the dark waters of the rivers, dragging down to the lower regions any venturesome Indian who bathes alone beneath its cold, white light. It is curious that the alligators play no part in this story of supernatural tragedy, and the fact of bathing in company being safer than bathing alone is accounted for by the splashing produced. This I tried to demonstrate, and the answer was curious. These low types of humanity believe the alligator to be equally afraid of the moon, and to prefer taking his meals by daylight! The Apiacás, unlike the Mundurucus, are not tattooed, and they seem to have very few queer ceremonies. In this respect they differ from the Uaupés of Brazilian Guiana, who practise the cruel rites of Juripari.

It was a source of keen regret that I could not visit the Apiacás' village in the thick forest, but the food shortage made a return to civilization imperative. In this connection it is interesting to note that white men cannot live for very long on the natural products of

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the forest without suffering from beri-beri. Even the natives suffer terribly from this and other wasting diseases. Consumption kills large numbers every year. Those suffering from this and other diseases are segregated, among the semi-civilized tribes, in separate villages, and are tended for a time by the old women. The hopelessly incurable are buried alive at their own request.

By drawing a rough map of the river I obtained the information that there is no junction between the little Martinho and affluents of the great Rio Madeira; that the range of low hills which could be seen ahead extended for "three suns," which signified three days' march, and that somewhere in the forest beyond there was a race of very short men of a pale colour. One of this tribe I afterwards located on a tributary of the Aripuanan river. It was a girl, who had evidently been made captive by another tribe. She was quite wild, and only about four feet in height. She appeared to belong to an offshoot of the large Nambiquaras family of Matto Grosso, although upon this point I am still not certain, and the story belongs to later chapters.

On the following day we loaded the canoe with fish, turtle, fruit and a kind of native arrowroot, together with the very small remaining quantity of civilized fare, preparatory to departure. I exchanged some trade goods for crude curios, and after distributing presents we paddled off down-stream, narrowly avoiding a serious accident when clearing the obstruction which had brought the Indian dug-out to an enforced halt.

On the journey down-stream we called at a

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Government outpost near the Bocca S. Manoel. The existence of this station had not been explained to me at Pará, and, moreover, was neither known to the two *caboclos* nor was shown on any of the maps in my possession. The Administrator was away down the river, but his assistant very kindly provided a small stock of civilized food, sufficient to last a day or two, and gave me my first insight into the task of the Indian Service of the Federal Government.

A very large part of the work of these men, so far as the tributaries of the Lower Amazon are concerned, is carried out by night on the fringe of the great unknown. The vast areas of unmapped forest are divided, roughly, into sections, and to each of these is allotted an officer, several armed guards, and one or two interpreters. During the daytime the sounds of the tropical jungle, with its teeming animal and insect life, are many and varied, but at night, when all is still, except for the possible howl of a jaguar, these men take up their post in a crow's-nest, built high up in the lofty trees. Then, with the aid of a megaphone to magnify the human voice, they send out messages of friendship and peace far and wide over the dark forest.

The natives in their *maloccas* are awakened by the curious sound, and lie trembling, but listening to the tales of the coming of their pale-faced brothers, bringing presents for all. To them the most curious thing is that the voice comes from the distant tree-tops and the words are in their own language.

At other outposts in the Brazilian interior, among the fierce Javahés—skilful users of the blow-pipe and poisoned dart—music has been employed very success-

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fully in this system of peaceful penetration. When the myriad calls of monkey, parrot, jaguar, puma and insect have died away, and the big tropical moon sheds its silver light over the sombre forest, the wails of a viola float through the isles. The natives in their concealed villages in the depths of the dark forest awake to the song of a new and wonderful bird. Curiosity is aroused and they track the sound. Unafraid in the bright moonlight they stand round the tree which conceals the player. Then the song ceases, and in its place comes a voice which tells them, in their own language, of all the good things which white messengers are bringing them. The natives in alarm glide back, snake-like, into the shelter of the dark forest, but the message of peace has been sent and received.

Another device, called "Attraction Posts," serves to complete the work of conciliation. Lanes are cut through the undergrowth leading from the camp right out into the forest. Every half-mile or so along these blazed trails presents are hung on the trees, together with brief messages, in native characters, explaining the peaceful mission of the white men, and telling of the more desirable gifts closer in towards the camp. It often happens that months elapse before any of these timid but very fierce natives appear within range of the post. During the hours of darkness every tree is stripped bare of gifts time and again; but no reprisals are taken, beyond indicating in the subsequent messages which accompany each present that secrecy is unnecessary when approaching either trees or camp, and that the white men will leave the locality unless

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the natives come to thank them for the gifts already received.

The success of these methods has been remarkable. Eventually the Indians approach the posts and friendship nearly always results. However, on more than one occasion attempts have been made to rush the camps of the Indian Service, and brave officers with their guards and interpreters have been killed. When a certain degree of friendliness has been established the natives are either provided free with implements for tilling the small patches of soil available for cultivation in these forests, or are employed at a very nominal annual retainer on some easy Government work. In one such case the Parecis, a most warlike race of the Brazilian interior, are employed in guarding the overland telegraph line connecting the state of Matto Grosso with the Madeira river. Previous to their pacification by these means no such line of communication could possibly have been built and maintained through the hundreds of miles of dense Equatorial forest. It would have been destroyed as fast as it was erected, and even the establishment of a chain of military posts in these feverish regions would not have saved it.

When an area inhabited by a certain tribe has been brought within the pale of civilization the posts are moved farther out into the vast forest sea, which stretches almost across tropical South America at its widest part, a distance of about 3000 miles. Out of the territory acquired in this way large areas are set aside as "Indian Reserves," and care is taken that the friendly tribes living within them are not exploited by unscrupulous traders.

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I give here these details of the work of this gallant corps because several of my journeys into unexplored parts of the country, and much of the information given here, could not have been accomplished without their aid and assistance.

By 16th June, comparatively short rations and hard work among the rapids, whirlpools and floating debris, combined with exposure to a fierce tropical sun, began to have their effect. The dried turtle had been exhausted, and of civilized fare, given us at the Bocca S. Manoel, there remained only a small quantity of biscuits and French chocolate. Curiously enough it was on this very day, with over eighty miles of river still dividing us from the first proper outpost of civilization, that what threatened to be a serious disaster occurred to the canoe. While trying to avoid a floating tree the bow was stove in by some submerged object, and the batalõe commenced to fill so rapidly that only by paddling hard was a sandy spit reached before sinking.

The actual damage to the canoe was not great, and could soon be repaired with bark from the forest, but everything, including the remainder of the biscuits and chocolate, was sodden wet, and most unpalatable. Added to these minor discomforts was the more serious delay occasioned, and when we again embarked two nights and a day had been wasted.

When one has been feeding well for many months the temporary absence of sufficient food is only a matter of discomfort, but after six weeks of comparatively low diet, and hard manual work in the Equatorial heat, great weakness follows rapidly on the lack of nourishment. The pangs of hunger, although severe, soon



HER PARTY FROCK.

Putting on the " Party Frock " of an Orinias child.



NONUYAS INDIANS OF THE IGARÁ-PARANÁ.

These cannibals are " dressed " for a tribal feast.

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pass, and only a sickening feeling of chronic lassitude is left. Fortunately my half-breed companions were not so fastidious as myself regarding their diet, and, in addition to a most repulsive-looking, brownish green fish, they consumed a large lizard in a half-raw state.

Journeys by canoe on Amazonian rivers are so much alike that it is at times difficult to tell one day from another. The retreat down the Tapajós differed in no way from many similar journeys in subsequent months. All are wild in scenery, and it is borne in upon the wanderer that many centuries must elapse before even a thread of civilization can be woven across these thousands of square miles of wilderness.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE VISIBLE EQUATOR

THE retreat down the Tapajós brought the little expedition to the verge of serious disaster. Lack of proper food in the steaming heat was beginning to tell seriously before the last eighty miles had been traversed. Hours were wasted trying to obtain a kind of native flour from several palm-thatch huts on different sides of the broad river. These huts afterwards turned out to be deserted. My two *caboclos* became quarrelsome, each trying to avoid exerting himself at the paddles, and cursing the parents of the other, while an intestinal trouble, common among white men on the rubber rivers, rendered me far less able than otherwise to resist the effects of heat, effort and low diet.

It is almost impossible for a white explorer, when off the beaten track in Amazonia, to get from either the river, the forest or the natives any proper food, beyond an occasional and very coarse fish and some fruit, which, incidentally, both need time and effort to obtain, and so nullify the good they do. Unforeseen delays on the outward plunge from, or subsequent retreat to, civilization, unless adequate provision for necessary supplies has been made beforehand, are certain to lead to disaster, and have been the cause of even more tragedies in this mysterious land of incomprehensible vastness

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than the hostility and stealthy warfare of the native tribes.

Happily that which has saved the lives of many on these rivers was also responsible for enabling my small expedition to reach Itaituba before complete exhaustion intervened: we were floating down with the current, which on all Amazonian rivers is perpetually flowing towards the main stream. The speed of this homeward-bound flow depends entirely upon the relative height of the Amazon compared with the tributary in question, because when the great river itself is in full flood it compels its affluents to conserve their water until its own level has dropped.

During this time thousands of square miles of forest are inundated, and for weeks after the actual floods have subsided these low-lying areas in the river valleys become immense and impassable swamps. Considerable experience is needed to avoid disaster through hydrographic, topographic and climatic peculiarities alone. On this particular occasion the miscalculation of the current saved several days of semi-starvation, but later on the pendulum swung in the opposite direction, and caused myself and two companions to be cut off from the outside world by nearly 200 miles of swamp left by the receding flood.

A week of improved menus and rest at Santarem, where there are several Europeans, and the two *caboclos*, as well as myself, had sufficiently recovered to be able to dispense with each other's company without shedding tears. My companions of the Tapajós expedition, which had proved very disappointing to me, returned to their homes near Pará, and I boarded a really palatial

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river steamer bound for Manáos, the little isolated and typically Amazonian town 1042 miles up the great river.

The journey up the broad, sunlit Amazon to its junction with the Rio Negro, just below this wonderful little town, is full of charm and interest. Gorgeous butterflies flit about the decks, and birds of bright plumage, disturbed by the movement and noise of the vessel, cross the river or fly along the forest-covered banks. At night immense moths of exquisite colouring are attracted from the shadowy banks by the lighted decks. Floating islets of brilliant green and uprooted trees make admirable resting-places for the vulture-like *urubus*, and other queer birds.

High above the wall of silent green forest the Amazonian eagle may be seen slowly circling in the central blue. Occasionally the shining surface of this—the world's greatest—river is broken by the roll of a dolphin. Huge fish rise up from the yellow depths to devour the refuse thrown overboard, and far away in the distance one catches a glimpse, every now and again, of unknown flat-topped ranges, vast areas of smoke-like Equatorial forests and open *campos*. It is the threshold of the unknown; the charted highway through an unmapped region as large as the whole of Europe, and there is mystery in every curve of the river, in every igarapé, and distant area of forest. Only the banks are known, and these very improperly. Crude huts of palm, with semi-naked inhabitants, who have miles of elbow-room, are all there is of civilization on this tropical highway in the great dead heart of a continent.

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At night there is mystery in the silence, the flashes of lightning which produce no thunder, the curious chirping of insects, the flames of vast forest fires, in front of which one can picture jaguars, antas, deer, monkeys, birds, snakes and hundreds of animals and reptiles fleeing in terror; and in the weird cry of the guaribas, and howl of the onça, sounds which travel great distances through the stillness of the Equatorial night. When nature is in a more gentle mood, the large, mellow tropical moon turns the dark river into a pathway of golden light, and silhouettes the tall and ghostly palms. Here are the tropics of the imagination: the starlit river, the beaches of silver sand, the gliding dug-out canoes, and the warm night zephyrs heavy with the odour of the great forests around.

The Amazon has, however, recently been made accessible to tourists. A big liner, with the aid of pilots of life-long experience, backed by the greatest organization in Amazonia, has conquered the river. Its mysteries and its glamour are open to those who desire to travel in luxury off the beaten track. This book being a record of exploration and travel among the remote native tribes, only very little space is available for descriptions of scenery or events, however unusual or interesting, in a general way, they may be, along the river approaches to the great unknown. If any of my readers should decide to make this unique journey, which they can now do safely and in comfort, then they will see that although Liverpool liners penetrate up-stream for a thousand miles, as far as Manáos, it would be possible to fire a rifle-shot from the deck at almost any point along the banks of even

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the main stream and be quite sure that it would bury itself in matted forest never yet trodden by the feet of white men.

The little settlement of Obidos, situated near a hill on the north side, is unique only because the river at this point is comparatively narrow, and both banks are visible without the intervention of islands. Then the river broadens again, and flows on between the truly wonderful wall of the great Amazon forest, which far exceeds in size and thickness of undergrowth that of the Congo, or other tropical rivers.

On the south bank of the Amazon, between Obidos and Itacoatiara, is situated the small settlement of Parintins, near the great river island of Tupinambaranas, upon which there is supposed to exist a lost city. Extending inland from this typical little Amazonian township is a river called the Camuma. A ten hours' journey up this stream brings the traveller to the native settlement of Maues, and the home of that queer medicinal beverage known throughout the length and breadth of the Amazon as "Guarana."

This is made by the Maues Indians from a small climbing plant of the *Sapin da cean* family (*Paullinia Sorbilis*), which not only grows wild in the forests, but is also cultivated. The seeds are gathered in November, dried in the sun, slightly roasted, ground to a fine powder, and, with the addition of water, made into a paste. Sometimes this paste is made up into sausage-like slabs, and smoked over a fire, when it becomes hard, and is then sold in Matto Grosso, Bolivia, and on the rivers of Amazonia. The Indians and *caboclos* prepare it for drinking by grating the slabs upon the dried and

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file-like tongue of the piraracú and then adding water to the powder. The paste is also worked up into curious ornaments in the form of alligators, iguanas, birds and snakes for sale as curios in Pará and Manáos.

Guarana, which is one of the comparatively few Amazonian medicinal essences mentioned in the British Pharmacopœia, forms not only a very stimulating drink, but is of acknowledged efficacy in cases of dysentery. In Amazonia it is made into a very palatable "mineral" water by the addition of carbonic acid gas, and vies in popularity with the old-established *assai*. At Maues, where the extract is made by semi-civilized Indians, there is a plantation of guarana bushes owned by an Italian. Small quantities have already been exported to the United States.

In this little up-country settlement there is also a post of the Indian Service of the Federal Government of Brazil. It is now the civilizing centre for the once fierce Maues Indians.

To return to the main stream of the Amazon. Days pass, and then come the few pink and white *barracas* and bungalows of Itacoatiara, or Serpa, standing in a small clearing on the north bank. This is the *entrepôt* for the Madeira river, that great stream which, from its junction with the Amazon, some eighty miles above Itacoatiara, runs southward, with many unknown tributaries, for over a thousand miles into the unexplored forests of Matto Grosso.

The Amazon is left behind, and the Rio Negro entered some nine miles before reaching Manáos. The meeting of the waters of these two rivers provides a curious scene. As its name implies, the Negro is

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composed of black water, and this forms huge dark patches and small whirlpools in the middle of the yellow Amazonian flood. So distinct are the outlines of these mottled patches that the bows of the steamer are floating in the dark water while the stern is still in the yellow of the Amazon. Here also are two dis-used lighthouses, and these are called by the natives "Stones of the Poraquay."

The electric eel, so much dreaded by the natives of all Amazonian rivers because of the terrible and sometimes fatal electric shock it gives when touched with the naked hand or body, is called "poraquay," and the mysterious light which once shone out from these two lonesome towers was, in some mysterious way, attributed to the agency of this dreaded reptile of the river.

Manáos from the sunlit, almost ocean-like waters of the Rio Negro makes a pretty picture. Glistening white houses, towers and dull red fluted tile roofs are set in the emerald-green frame of the tropical jungle, which is broken, here and there, by red-brown earthen cliffs and tiny creeks, or igarapés, of blue-black water. The *coup d'œil* reminds one of similar scenes in the East, in Africa, even on the shores of the blue Mediterranean. Upon landing, however, these curiously sudden and diverse impressions pass away, and it is realized that this one and only town of Amazonia, situated over a thousand miles from civilization in every direction, has an atmosphere entirely its own.

The most curious feature is its modern equipment combined with its isolation. A harbour is supplied with a system of elevators and wire-rope transporters from immense floating quays to the river bank, in order to

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overcome the rise and fall of the river, some sixty feet! A fine tramway system, which, not content to serve the town, runs out into the jungle to a restaurant at Flores. An electric light system also supplies current for fans and cooking. It has a pure water supply, several well-informed journals which print news from all parts of the world, a fine theatre with little beyond local talent, a museum of coins, the fifth largest collection in the world, and yet there is no railway station. From any part of the town the wild jungle can be reached by a twenty minutes' walk. Alligators are almost the sole inhabitants of the igarapés on the opposite bank of the river. A native woman washing clothes on the beach of that part of the town known as S. Raymundo saw her child, who was bathing, in the jaws of an immense alligator. Rushing into the water, she thrust her fingers into the brute's eyes, and the little brown body was released. Just beyond Flores, on the only country road anywhere around, jaguars have attacked lonely pedestrians within rifle shot of the tramway line. From the cathedral tower, far away across the great river, wild, unexplored, black-green forests extend in an unbroken line into the violet mist which obscures the horizon.

There is a hospitable English colony and club, where the restrictions are more natural than artificial. Under these circumstances, and considering the somewhat low state of my health, it was but natural that an intended stay of a day or two should be doubled. During my three visits to Manáos the greatest difficulty has been to get away again without giving offence to my many friends there, but this is no reason why I

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should weary the reader with an account of social life in this little outpost of civilization.

A curious natural phenomenon occurs in this and other regions of Amazonia each year about 24th June, which, by a queer coincidence, also heralds the festival of S. Juan. The temperature of the water above the town drops suddenly, and to such an extent that small fish often die. The effect is also noticeable in the air along the river bank, especially of the Amazon itself. People in settlements as wide apart as Iquitos, Manáos and Obidos complain of the sudden cold, and it is possible to wear almost European clothing at the Equator for these few days. The cause of this cold wind and water stream originates over the Pacific. The comparatively warm "Chinook" wind strikes the highest Andes, melts the snows and whistles through the bleak passes, which rob it of heat, and comes down with the snow-water through the Equatorial forests of the Amazon plains.

After spending some time collecting all the meagre information available regarding the known habitat of savage Indian tribes in the remote forests, and carrying out business of a more prosaic nature, I heard, one day, from an officer of the Indian Service of the Federal Government, that some new tribes were believed to exist in about latitude 8° S., in the dense forests and unhealthy swamps between the Madeira and the Aripuanan rivers.

It appeared that about eight months before an unidentified tribe had attacked and killed some half-breed rubber gatherers who had penetrated into these distant regions, some 900 miles southward of Manáos,

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on the frontier of Matto Grosso. The *caboclo* survivor had eventually succeeded in reaching civilization, and had informed the authorities at Porto Velho, on the Madeira.

The officer to whom I was indebted for this information was one of that fine corps known as the "Indian Protection Service," inaugurated by General Rondon in 1910. Among its regulations is the following (Art. 219):—"No work, no peril, and no sacrifice is to be avoided when necessary to effect the pacification of the savage Indian tribes and to help and protect them from exploitation and oppression." I never saw this gallant officer again, but heard that he was afterwards killed on the Venezuelan border. More recently, however, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Bento Martins Pereira de Lemos, the veteran head of the Indian Service in Amazonia, together with his assistant, Senhor J. Gondim, from both of whom I received great assistance in finally identifying some of the tribes met with at different times during my travels on the remote Amazons. The last I saw of Dr Lemos was with a little Indian boy and girl on each side of him, who but a year or so before had been savages of an unknown cannibal tribe which I had met in the twilit forests of the Aripuanan. But this forms the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER VII

UP THE GREAT MADEIRA TO THE COUNTRY OF THE CARIPUNAS

LEAVING Manáos, I proceeded down-stream to the little settlement of Itacoatiara, and there transhipped into the river steamer *Francisco Salles*, bound for the upper reaches of the Madeira river. At some of the small settlements *en route*, or at the headquarters of the Madeira-Marmoré railway, at Porto Velho, I hoped to obtain more exact information as to the locality in which the unknown Indian tribes were supposed to exist, for it must be remembered that I had no closer indication of their hunting grounds than an area of wild, unexplored forest and swamp, about 300 miles long by 200 broad, lying between the rivers Madeira and Aripuanan, with a centre line in latitude 8° S.

The resources and possibilities for exploiting this region were, like its inhabitants, also unknown, and the likelihood of important discoveries seemed, then, to outweigh considerations of failure. At the end of the river road that most isolated railway in the world, the Madeira-Marmoré, was portaging over 200 miles of foaming cataracts, and a first-hand description of this great undertaking, which the Americans said was being accomplished by "Dr Lovelace and quinine," would, I knew, interest many readers of papers and magazines in Europe and the United States.

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With these two objectives in view I watched the jungle-covered banks of the Amazon give place to the still thicker and darker forests of the great Madeira river. Just after passing the large island at the mouth of the river the first misadventure occurred, the steamer came to a sudden halt on a newly formed and still submerged sand-bar, opposite the giant imbauba-trees of Fazendinha. After an hour's work the little vessel was refloat, and again addressed herself to the task of stemming the swift current. For miles the river wound its way through dense forest on both banks, with Urucurituba, Ypringa, and many other islands interrupting its course. Several small palm-thatch houses were passed before the next stop, this time voluntary, for taking aboard wood at a camp called Perseverança, about seventy-five miles up-stream. Here there were numerous wild rubber and coca trees. It occurred to me, then, that in the steamy forests nothing but *perseverance* would keep men toiling there, cutting logs for a small river steamer.

Shortly after leaving this place, although the banks had hitherto been fairly high, we came to a vast area of flooded forest and open water, near the Furo das Guaribas (monkeys); and this proved to be Prepriocas Lake, which had overflowed its low banks and joined forces with the Madeira river. After this the light of the second day failed with nothing but matted forest on every side. Next morning we arrived at the little settlement of Borba, with its few dilapidated mud-houses, *barracas* and palm-thatch huts, on a steep earth bank, surrounded by dense and dark forest. A tiny church stands in the centre of the village square, fronting the river. The school was closed, because the

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teachers would not stay, and the few families of semi-naked and poverty-stricken *caboclos* had a forlorn look of abandonment, beri-beri and malaria.

After leaving Borba there were some curious rocky ledges extending back for nearly a thousand feet on the east bank. The forest became taller and the aisles darker. Here and there the sombre green wall was relieved by the yellow flowers of that famous Amazonian tree, the *pao d'arco*. The banks were low and swampy. The river curved suddenly, and shortly afterwards a break occurred in the forest wall, marking the junction of the River Autaz. On the opposite side several *barracas* were passed, and the forest degenerated into low matted jungle. Here we negotiated the dangerous Marapity Channel, which was scarcely passed before the rocks known as the Pedras dos Ganchos, which seemed to cause whirlpools all over the surface of the river, rose up in front. Igarapés, lakes and wild forest were all around.

Shortly after passing Alligator Island, on which the Greaves Expedition was wrecked many years ago, we came to Vista Alegre, with its brazil-nut forests, two-storeyed houses and little mission station. The banks are higher about here, and the population more numerous. The Muras Indians who once inhabited this region have been decimated by more war-like tribes to the south, and no sign of their *maloccas* is now visible from the river. The current is very strong just here and whirlpools numerous. The forest growth had so far been much heavier than on the banks of the Amazon.

A few miles further on, beyond a little place called Taboçal, we passed a small cemetery, with numerous



(1) A NATIVE RAFT ON THE UPPER AMAZON.

Families live for weeks in the crude thatch huts, while the raft floats for hundreds of miles with the tide.

(2) CHUNCHO GIRLS.

The facial disfigurement denotes the tribe to which they belong.

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wooden crosses marking the last resting-places of the many victims of this sickly river, among whom is the explorer Alvez. Then came Aripuanan Island, which masks the junction of the Aripuanan river with the Madeira.

From this point onwards the great forest between these two diverging rivers was almost unexplored, and somewhere within its semi-dark aisles the Indian tribes of whom I was in search had their *maloccas* and their hunting grounds. It was, however, unlikely to be less than 200 miles south of the junction of these fine rivers, and the question arose as to which one was the best to descend. As I had so far been unable to gain any information, other than vague assurances of the existence of fierce tribes and the great danger of attempting to penetrate the forests and less-known streams around, it seemed futile to leave the steamer and collect my outfit preparatory to attempting the descent of the Aripuanan, upon which there was no navigation service. To do this successfully meant a journey into the unknown of about 800 miles by canoe, which could have been accomplished only by a well-equipped party, such as that which afterwards did actually follow this river from its source to its junction with the Madeira.

A closer approach to the unexplored forests between these rivers was what I sought, and, after several attempts, succeeded in finding. In order to do this I made up my mind to travel further up-stream, and try several of the smaller rivers running out of the Madeira on the east bank.

After about eighty miles of uninteresting country we swirled through some miniature rapids, between rocks, in a dangerous bend of the river near Urua Island.

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Again the forest walls closed in, and for many miles nothing was visible but the fringe of the low jungle, with here and there a palm-thatch hut, a *barraca*, or an isolated *caboclo* family. It was, however, in this dismal reach that occurred the most wonderful sunset so far witnessed. The whole sky was ablaze with crimson and golden fire between billows of cloud. The olive-green forest cut across this vivid glare like a dark ruled line. Here and there the river reflected the heavenly flame, which seemed to me, then, to eclipse both the midnight sun of the North Cape and the northern lights of Alaska. The night which followed was, however, dark and stormy.

The bright little settlement of Manicoré, built on a steep bank above the muddy river's highest level, is threatened with slow destruction by the undermining action of the swift current. Although there are no proper streets, and the few houses and sheds stand on the bare and often muddy earth, it is not nearly so dilapidated or depressing in appearance as Borba. On the other hand, there is absolutely nothing of interest, for the jungle is close around and the inhabitants are mostly of the *caboclo* type. The little church is the only building which is not falling to pieces.

Around Jaguar Island the river winds considerably, and it is said that at one point it is possible to hear a shot fired twenty miles further up-stream, because, as the crow flies, it would be only two miles distant. About here the Madeira is joined by the unhealthy Marmellos river, the head-waters of which are supposed to be somewhere near the Tapajós, and the intervening country is very largely in the hands of wild tribes. About this deadly stream many tragedies could

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be written. On one rubber estate, only a few miles from the mouth, over a hundred men died of fever in a single year.

On Jaguar Island there is a small seringal at which we called to land some stores. Here I was shown an immense forest tree which, when cut with a machete, yielded a large quantity of milk-like juice. The Indians of the forests drink this in place of cow's milk, and the semi-civilized inhabitants of the rivers use it in their coffee. The natives call this tree *solu*, but its botanical name I do not know. This vegetable milk is quite palatable and apparently harmless, but, so far as I am aware, no proper chemical analysis has yet been made. There are literally thousands of medicinal herbs, quite unknown to civilization, which are used with wonderful success by the natives for minor ailments, and a rich harvest awaits the investigator in this field.

Still the wall of forest continued. A call was made at Jumas Quadras, a large station on the west bank. Then the old São Pedro Mission, which lies back in the forest and is now abandoned and overgrown, was passed, and some hours later the little town of Humaitá appeared ahead. It stands on a high bank with stone steps leading up from both high and low water mark. This little settlement has several brick houses besides the usual mud buildings and palm-thatch huts. Moreover, it has both light and pure water. It was built on the private estate of Colonel Monteiro, who presented the cleared site, township and municipal buildings to the Brazilian Government in 1890. The population now numbers just over a thousand.

It was along the banks of the Madeira river that the

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rubber industry of Amazonia was first developed, and, being the highway to north-east Bolivia, it affords, perhaps, the best opportunity of studying the conditions obtaining on the few and very thin threads of semi-civilization which traverse some portions of the dead heart of South America. A mile inland from the river bank and the primeval forest closes in, with barbarism all around. The terminus of steam navigation is at Porto Velho, where the most wonderful, and at the same time the most isolated, railway in the world—the Madeira-Marmoré—carries the traveller and his merchandise past the 250 miles of rapids to the navigable rivers of the wild Beni country of Bolivia.

It is unnecessary to describe here either the last fifty miles of the Madeira river, where the stream contracts between Humaitá and Porto Velho, or the railway which begins at the latter place, follows the river bank, and terminates at Guajara-Merim in Bolivia. Porto Velho is a clean little European settlement well laid out and lighted. It is the headquarters of the railway administration, and many of its bungalows are protected from the mosquito by wire gauze. Previous to the completion of this line in 1913, which was built by Brazil under the terms of the Treaty of Petropolis, in return for territorial concessions from Bolivia, all goods bound for the latter country from the Atlantic, by way of the Amazon and Madeira rivers, had to be unloaded at São Antonio, and conveyed, together with the canoes themselves, overland past nineteen cataracts extending over a distance of 250 miles. The gigantic nature of the task of getting European goods into north-eastern Bolivia by this route, which was little worse than any other, will be

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realized when it is called to mind that the cargo had first to be borne across the Atlantic to Pará and carried 900 miles up the Amazon, then shipped another 650 miles down the navigable portion of the Madeira to São Antonio, where it had to be again unloaded, re-packed in shallow canoes, and conveyed onwards until the rapids intervened. Then began a long overland journey on the backs of natives, occupying many days, and this was followed by other river journeys of hundreds of miles through semi-explored country in which fevers were rife and the surrounding forests were inhabited by savage tribes—in all, a hazardous journey of about six months' duration amid Equatorial heat and storms.

The Madeira-Marmoré railroad was commenced in 1874, but several expeditions were compelled by fever, swamps and hostile Indians to abandon the project. Eventually it was completed in the same way as the Panama Canal, by medical as well as engineering science. The Americans very truthfully say that it is the most wonderful forest railway in the world. It is, however, a fact that almost every sleeper along the 367 kilometres of track represents a human life.

Before this line circumvented the falls of the Upper Madeira, and to a certain extent up to the present time, there was a picturesque figure who dominated the trade and all else in this wild region. His name is Nicolas Saurez. If this man's story is ever written the result should be a stirring tale of life in the great forests and on the rubber rivers of Amazonia. Beginning as a trader, Nicolas Saurez opened up negotiations with the wild tribes of the Beni, Marmoré and Madre de Dios rivers, savages whom, up to that time, no white

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man had ever dared to approach. Soon this man and his brothers obtained concessions which were little short of countries with sovereign rights. He ruled the wild Indians with a firm hand, exacting terrible reparations for the slightest insult or treachery. One of the Saurez family was killed by these Indians, and gruesome stories are told of the punishment of whole tribes.

In the Acre War the irregular forces of Saurez were a dominant factor. In later times he crushed the frontier gang of half-breed robbers who used to descend suddenly upon rubber estates, rob and murder, and then cross the border into comparative safety. A permit from Saurez in the Beni country was worth far more to the explorer and traveller than a passport specially issued by any government. On several occasions I had the pleasure of meeting one of the nephews of this "Ruler of the Beni," who had been educated in Europe. A kinder and better informed Bolivian it would have been impossible to find, but, alas, disaster and death finally conquered his great schemes for the development of his country.

At Porto Velho I learned of a family of Caripuna Indians whose village was some miles up a small stream called the Mutum-Paraná. Although savages in the fullest sense, these queer natives were more or less known by the railway pioneers in the region, and, consequently, they could not belong to the wild and unknown tribes of whom I was in search. However, considering the hundred-mile journey necessary to reach their village well worth while because of the information which could, in all probability, be obtained regarding more inaccessible tribes, I unloaded my

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spare kit and stores from the *Francisco Salles* and journeyed over the line of the Marmoré railway to the mouth of the muddy stream called the Mutum-Paraná.

Thanks to the hospitable officials of this marvellous line, which begins and ends over 2000 miles from civilization, I was able to obtain a canoe and two tame Caripuna Indians to take me up the river from the little settlement near the mouth, on the rapid-broken upper reaches of the Madeira. After passing through São Antonio, which is about seven miles from the starting-point at Porto Velho, the forest becomes less heavy, and the colour of the soil changes from a rich red-brown to a light sandy yellow. Farther on the jungle degenerates in places into mere scrub, and the line passes through many miles of swamps.

The Mutum-Paraná is a narrow and shallow stream with tall dark trees on both banks. The underbush is not so thick as elsewhere in Amazonia, but, at certain places, the sky is almost entirely obscured by the canopy of trees, which seem to have all their leaves and branches spreading out from the top of the trunk, and resemble giant umbrellas. It is an unhealthy river, and my two canoe men, who rejoiced in the names of "Washington" and "Cochrane," were both suffering from beri-beri in its early stages. They were, however, quite friendly and docile, having been employed by the railway company to obtain fish from the rivers to feed the employees. Both were dressed in a kind of loose shirt and trousers.

There was little of interest to be seen along the course of this muddy and semi-dark river, probably because nothing at all, beyond the wall of the *matto grosso*, or thick forest, was ever visible. What the

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country was like beyond the banks could only be vaguely guessed at by the absence of hills. The heat was great, and the mosquitoes and *piums* more than usually ferocious. What made matters worse was the slow rate of progress in the heavy dug-out canoe. However, the Indian village proved to be closer to the mouth of the river than was expected, and just before sunset the palm-thatch *maloccas* could be seen through a fringe of trees on the river bank.

When the canoe came alongside the bank I could just discern a semicircle of wild-looking, naked figures beneath the trees about a hundred yards distant. Picking up my canvas bag of presents I jumped ashore, but, as this tribe were known not to be openly hostile to white men, I considered it prudent to make it quite clear that my mission was a peaceful one by going forward without other arms than the revolver under my jacket. The semicircle of Indians neither advanced nor receded; they simply stood nervously still and stared. Whether it was that they knew certain officials of the railway and rather expected me to be one or other of them, or that being guided to their village by two of their own tribe was some guarantee of my respectability, I cannot say, but when the strings of cheap beads, pocket-knives, small mirrors and other gifts were brought out of the canvas bag the line of completely naked figures, which now turned out to be composed of men, women and children, advanced haltingly. It had been explained to me at Porto Velho that these Caripunas had suffered much at the hands of unscrupulous rubber gatherers, who carried off their young girls, leaving them a day or so later in the forest miles away from the village. If treated as human beings,



CARIPUNA INDIAN STRINGING HIS BOW.

Notice the body strap and the grass binding on legs and arms. The height of the bow is 7 feet.

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however, they were a happy, docile, although dying race.

In appearance the Caripuna Indians are decidedly Mongolian, with bronze-coloured skins and glossy black hair cut to form a fringe in front and hang long behind. They are of small stature, and go about entirely naked, the men wearing only a thin fibre string round the waist and the women an ornamented girdle, both of which tend rather to increase than to diminish their nakedness. Babies are carried in a sling round the mother's neck; and the only cooking utensils seem to be crude earthenware pans.

The Caripunas swell their stomachs by eating earth when no better food is to hand. The effect of this, and of farina, will be seen in the photographs. It was in this little native village on the Mutum-Paraná that I first saw the almost universal food of both the semi-civilized and savage Indians made from the poisonous mandioca. Shortly after dawn the women of the tribe went to the farina ovens, made of dried clay, under which fires are kept alight almost continuously. Over these ovens, to protect them from the tropical rains, is a low thatched roof. The mandioca roots are then placed in a kind of semicircular trough, made from the split stem of a mirity palm, and are crushed into a pulp. When this has been done the imperfectly kneaded flour is put through a sieve made of strings of fibre, reduced to a fine dough and formed into cakes. These are sometimes left for a few hours to ferment.

At this stage in the process of making native farina there is a quantity of prussic acid present in the cakes, which are consequently poisonous. This is eradicated by placing the dough, after water has been added, in

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a curious fibre bag, or press, which, when each end is pulled, squeezes by compression and so ejects both water and poison. This process is repeated several times before the half-dry, yellowish white flour is turned into a pan or open earthenware pot. It is then moved about with a stick, while the utensil is over the fire, until it becomes yellowish brown and is fit to eat. Farina is carried by almost all Indians when on the warpath or out hunting, wrapped in leaves. Its food value is, however, very poor, and, in addition to creating distended stomach, is also largely responsible for the prevalence of anæmia and beri-beri.

With the aid of my boy "Washington," who could speak a few words of English, I endeavoured, after distributing the presents, to carry on a monosyllabic conversation, with the idea of discovering if any other tribes of Indians were known to be in the surrounding country. For some time, however, it seemed that the forest was almost uninhabited, except for several other families of Caripunas scattered over a wide area to the southward. Then I hit upon the idea of drawing a crude map on the mud floor of the clearing, and beyond being shown several times in succession the relative position of Porto Velho, which they evidently thought I desired to reach, nothing resulted from this effort. The difficulty was to make them understand that I desired information as to the whereabouts of other tribes, not of the Caripuna family.

When about to give up in despair I elicited vigorous signs of negation by drawing a line running north-east from the Mutum-Paraná. By following up this clue I ultimately learned that great warriors who hated the white man as well as the Caripunas lived many suns

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distant in that direction. This confirmed the opinion held by experienced travellers in Porto Velho that the forests farther back from the Madeira river, and to the north-east, were inhabited by the Parintintins, who, although never seen anywhere near the settlements, were supposed to be the most savage tribe in the great Amazon forest. I pronounced the name "Parintintin," but received only the blank stare of incomprehension. Either my pronunciation was at fault so far as this word was concerned, or else this tribe was not known by that name to other tribes of neighbouring regions. Later in my travels the reason for this lack of understanding became apparent. The native name for this savage tribe is entirely different.

This Indian village on the Mutum-Paraná consisted of six communal *maloccas*, each containing the domestic fire-sides of three families, who appeared to live in comparative harmony but without the smallest element of privacy. The semi-dark interiors were filled with the smoke from the wood fires smouldering on the mud floors. There was a small clearing planted with mandioca.

The Caripunas are fishermen of no mean ability, but they prefer killing and eating monkeys to the more strenuous pursuit of big game, such as the onça, anta and deer. Owing to the large number of venomous snakes in the forests of the Upper Madeira many of these natives are killed every year by the bite, sting or crushing coils of these loathsome reptiles. The young children are sometimes quite good-looking for Indians, but they grow old very rapidly, and are usually married at the age of twelve or thirteen years.

The Caripunas do not disfigure themselves either

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by tattooing or painting their bodies, but they bind the calf of the leg and the muscles of the arm with light fibre thongs. Whether this is done with the idea of increasing their physical strength is not definitely known. But it seems unlikely, because the custom is by no means universal among the men, and is often adopted by both women and young girls. Their canoes are of the most crude kind, and consist of hollowed tree trunks, bent into a curve, with open ends which float high above the water. The danger of moving about the shallow but alligator-infested rivers and igarapés in these primitive boats must be very great. The men are armed with poisoned spears and arrows. Their war-bows are about seven feet long, and with these they are remarkably good marksmen at fairly close range. I did not see any blow-pipes, clubs, dancing-sticks, *macanas* or other weapons and symbols of office in use among the Caripunas such as I saw later among the fiercer tribes which had not then come into close contact with the white man. One Indian who had been operated upon by the doctors in the Candelaria Hospital near Porto Velho, and was hobbling about on one leg, has, I understand, since died; and consumption has followed the white man into this region, with dire results to nearly the whole of this tribe.

One of the curiosities in this village was a mottled Indian of a tribe whose usual habitat is in the forests between the west bank of the Madeira and the Purus. His body was covered with white and brown patches, the result of a curious disease once very prevalent on the Rio dos Purus, or "River of the Spotted Ones." It has been suggested that this obscure but not deadly complaint is caused by sleeping without clothes on

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the river banks. The only known tribe which now suffers in this way are the Pammarys of the Purus, and one authority in Porto Veino gave the opinion that it was due to drinking the juice of certain poisonous herbs.

I camped on the river bank near the Caripuna village for two nights, and, on the second, one of those violent storms common in the Amazon region let loose its furies of rain and lightning shortly after sunset. The canvas of my small tent sagged under the drumming of the tropical deluge, and the darkest recesses of the forest were illuminated by the almost incessant flashes. Scarcely had it started before the flap of the tent was opened and a small body entered unceremoniously. Being in the act of lighting the lamp, the draught through the opened tent blew out the lighted match. For a moment I did not know whether to light a fresh match and so render myself helpless in the event of an attack, or whether to feel about cautiously for the rifle which was somewhere under the pile of stores hastily pulled inside the tent when the rain commenced. Then it dawned on me that the intruder was probably one of my own boys who had come in for shelter, and seeking a certain amount of cover by kneeling behind the pile of stores I lit a match—and laughed!

The intruder was a small child of about eleven, whose hair and skin were shining with the water. She looked so thoroughly frightened, either by the lightning or finding herself trapped in a way which blocked the opening by which she had entered, that I hastened to light the little hurricane lamp. Paralysed with fear, the child was unable to speak or move, and only shrank away when I attempted to reassure her. The position was an awkward one. At any moment she might regain

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the use of her tongue, and the consequences of a shriek might be serious, because, although considered docile, these Caripunas are still savages, and consequently would act on the spur of the moment without reasoning, for they had suffered much at the hands of unscrupulous *caboclos*.

Unpleasant as it certainly was, I dived out of the tent into the deluge, and promptly fell full length in the mud over some cases which had been forgotten in the haste to get essential stores under cover. Finding my way with the aid of the lightning to the disused *malocca* which had been allotted to my two Caripuna boys, who, incidentally, came from another village, I frightened them also by suddenly appearing in the dim firelight of the interior. Grabbing Washington by the arm, I pulled him out into the storm and back to the tent. My surprise can be imagined when the child, by whom all the trouble was caused, was discovered sitting on my bed eating biscuits out of a tin in a most unconcerned manner!

I explained the difficulty to Washington, who grinned, and then spoke to the girl. It appeared that curiosity had prompted her to look into the tent, through a slit between the door-flap, when caught by the storm, and that she had not been frightened by my unexpected presence but by the lighted match I held in my hand! Needless to say this by no means shy young lady was promptly returned by Washington to the bosom of her family, with both hands, as well as her mouth, full of Huntley & Palmer's oatmeal. This little incident proved to me that the Caripunas are generally kind to their children, otherwise this girl would have shown signs of fear when discovered eating my biscuits.

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Next morning I made inquiries and discovered that the girl's name was "Tite," but could not obtain any indication of its meaning. She attributed the lighted match to my ability to catch some of the lightning with my hand!

The impossibility of making a traverse of the forest to the north-east without a large number of men armed with machetes, and a supply of stores for some months, caused the decision to return at once to Porto Velho, and then to reconnoitre up several of the streams leading out of the Madeira in that direction below the nineteen cataracts. The upper reaches of several of these rivers were quite unexplored, and I decided to try to reach the forests around the head-waters of the Gy-Paraná. In Porto Velho this was considered extremely dangerous because of the believed hostility of the Indian tribes inhabiting this region, but nothing can be accomplished in the way of exploration or research in the great Equatorial forests of Amazonia without a cheerful acceptance of the unknown. There was, however, a peril which I did not intend to take, and that was slow starvation in the dimly lit forests—by far the greatest risk taken by the experienced traveller in Amazonia.

When my destination and objects became known in Porto Velho no canoe men could be hired, because two Germans had been murdered by unknown Indians in the Gy-Paraná region a few months before, only their bones having been found by *caboulos*. Determined not to be foiled in this way, I boarded the *Francisco Salles*, which was returning down the Madeira, and disembarked at the little settlement of Humaitá. Here I obtained two semi-civilized Toras Indians from the seringal Nova Vida, and "bought" them on

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the understanding that they would, if required, act as scouts in the forests of the Gy-Paraná.

Without special facilities the traveller in those areas where rubber or nut forests exist is likely to find himself stranded at the terminal point of steam communication because of the difficulty of hiring native canoe men, and especially carriers. The reason for this is that nearly all the half-civilized Indians are in debt to their masters, the seringal or *barraca* owners, and cannot accept service with a stranger unless the latter pays these debts. If an Indian leaves the service of his master while in debt he is forcibly brought back, and if some new-comer pays the amount required to free him, then he is that much indebted to his new master. Although this system is much more tempered with justice in Brazil than in Peru, because of the presence in the forests of officers of the Indian Service, the European traveller will find the amount of those "debts" remarkably high unless he is able to obtain his followers through friends, or from the posts of the Indian Service of the Federal Government.

After two days in mosquito-infested Humaitá, bartering with unscrupulous half-breeds for various stores of doubtful quality, my two Indians carried the packages down the steps in the steep bank to the canoe, and we pushed off into the dark, swift-running river. It was a steaming hot day, and the surface shone like molten gold. My little pocket thermometer registered 98° F. in the shade. Before nightfall we had passed Boa Esperança, which consists of a few palm-houses, negotiated the difficult passage between the Pedras das Gaivotas, and were all thoroughly tired out with

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the effort. That night we encamped in a small grassy clearing near the seringal Mirary. It was a beautiful tropical night, with the silvery moonlight shining on the broad river and silhouetting the tall umbrella-trees of the great forest.

Several times as I walked up and down the narrow clearing to obtain exercise after the hours spent in the canoe the fine web of a spider had become entangled in my hands and face. As this is by no means an unusual happening when passing through comparatively dry areas of *matto* it would have passed unnoticed had my attention not been attracted to a dark patch on the canvas wall of my tent, illuminated from the inside by a special lamp which I always carry because it sheds a sufficient light both to read and write in comfort. Upon closer investigation the dark patch turned out to be a hairy spider of large size, apparently one of the bird-eating variety, and with the aid of my pocket electric torch I discovered that its web extended, in triangle fashion, between two trees, about twenty feet apart, and my tent!

Here I must confess to a loathing which almost amounts to a horror of spiders, and the sight of this huge creature silhouetted in every objectionable detail by the diffused light through the thin silk canvas of the tent caused me not only to turn suddenly chilly in spite of the almost stifling heat of the tropical night, but, somehow, I could not think of a way to get rid of the intruder. To have struck at it with the butt end of the rifle would have torn the canvas and brought down my tent, possibly breaking my much-prized lamp inside. Equally as disastrous would be a shot, and yet I could not bring myself to sleep inside the tent with

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that loathsome creature only a foot or two from my face—although outside the canvas.

Ten minutes later I was still in the same predicament. A pail of water would remove it, but perhaps send it inside the tent! At last, in desperation, I roused one of the sleeping Indians in the canoe. The spider was caught in the folds of a spare piece of mosquito netting, and later joined my collection. I then retired, feeling thoroughly relieved but utterly disgusted with myself, and consequently spent a restless night contemplating, in the light of modern mental science, the absurdity of a pet loathing.

On these sickly tropical rivers of remote Amazonia it is quite unnecessary to record that the early morning was beautifully fine, because month in and month out, except perhaps during the height of the rainy season, the early hours of the day are always bright, fresh and sunny. Scarcely had we commenced paddling upstream before some very high red-clay bluffs appeared to break the monotony of the forest on the east bank. Then, after skirting the green palm islands of Pasto Grande, the canoe was suddenly swirled round in a whirlpool formed by a highly dangerous submerged rock. All our efforts were needed at the paddles to avoid being upset, until the river again grew calm.

Shortly after midday we passed the *foz*, or mouth, of the unexplored Maicy river, which, later, turned out to be the best route into the heart of the Parintintin country. Near to the mouth of this river were several tile-roofed houses, a *barraca* and a windmill. These, I learned later, formed a post of the Indian Service, and had I called there before proceeding up the Gy-Paraná much time, trouble and a certain amount of

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danger would have been saved. The traveller's greatest trouble in unknown Amazonia is the lack of information as to what has been previously accomplished by others, the absence of reliable maps or a system of intelligence. However, if we had not struggled up the unhealthy Gy-Paraná several tribes, then unknown, would not have been discovered.

Soon after passing Calamar Island, and the four houses grandiosely called the settlement of Calamar, on the opposite bank, we turned into the isle-blocked mouth of the Gy-Paraná. For the information of any future travellers it should be noted here that the entrance to this river is on the left-hand side; that on the right leads into a little stream called, locally, the Rio Preto. When once away from the broad Madeira the last link with all there is of civilization seemed suddenly to snap. Both sights and sounds which had passed unnoticed on the wide river thrust themselves upon the attention, especially in the peculiar sunset hush of Equatoria.

Almost instantly the wall of dark trees closed in on the silently moving stream, and the air was filled with the peculiar rank odour of the tropical forest. We made camp beneath a giant induba just as the golden afterglow flooded the more open but silent aisles of the unexplored forests around.

CHAPTER VIII

INTO THE HEART OF THE EQUATORIAL FOREST

EARLY next morning while passing close to the bank a snarling sound and a snapping of twigs came from the underbush near by. The next moment I obtained my first view of the Amazonian tiger, or jaguar. The brushwood and tall aquatic grass parted abreast of the canoe, and the king of South American big game stood for several seconds, apparently dazed by the light, in full view and within about ten yards. The light yellow coat was beautifully marked with jet-black stripes and blotches. It was impossible to judge the full size of this beast, because only the head, breast and fore-paws were visible in the tall grass and matted growth which lined the banks. He snarled and vanished almost instantly when his raised head caught our scent. The two Indians wanted to stalk it, but time and food being limited this could not be permitted. During later travels, however, I was fortunate in being present at one of these hunts. The Turas stalk the jaguar with the aid of a grass-rope snare, lowered in the form of a running noose from a tree, across the spoor leading down to the river or water-hole where these beasts come to drink, mostly at sunset. The end of the grass-rope is arranged pulley-wise over a branch, and the animal, when caught, is literally hanged. The skins are used, not for clothing, but as rugs in their palm-thatch huts, and also for protection against the torrential rain. The native objection to

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the use of the spear is the damage to the skins caused by the necessarily numerous thrusts of the blade.

There can be few more beautiful sights than the Amazon forest when seen at close quarters. From the broad rivers, such as the Amazon itself, the Tapajós, Madeira or Ucayali, it appears to be an almost continuous and very monotonous wall of misty green—just a chaos of vegetation. Closer acquaintance, however, reveals its exquisite beauty. Spreading out over the river, with its reflection of a million leaves, are palms of innumerable varieties: the tall mirity, with large fan-shaped fronds and clusters of scarlet fruit, often fifty feet high; the delicate caraná, with spines on its trunk and foliage; the jupati, with its masses of feathery blossom dimming even the daylight of the river clearing, and the climbing jacitará (*desmoncus*) clinging, lichen-like, to the trunk of almost every leviathan of the forest. Massive silver-white trunks rise up against the wall of dark leaves, and high above the amazing sea of foliage spread out their branches like gigantic umbrellas, both green and red. The *assai*, reed-like and moving in the faintest breeze, stands side by side with the tucumá, solid and aged. Ropes of green fibre hang in loops from the tallest branches; orchids, common, catteleya, and varied, peep from their moist, exuberant beds, and when the sun sinks in the Occident the forest changes from green and gold to red, russet, purple and then to ghostly black.

These were idle days in the light bark canoe with its awning of palm-thatch, for it was high river season and there was no current. The mighty Amazon, whose waters colour even the Atlantic Ocean for a distance of

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200 miles seaward from its mouth, imposes its will upon all tributaries, even those like the Gy-Paraná, nearly 1000 miles from the parent stream and 1800 miles from the ocean. It compels them to store their water until its own level drops sufficiently to permit the acceptance of their tribute. This causes the flooding of immense areas, and for nearly two days we sailed on a succession of placid lakes and through flooded forest. The peculiar silence of these vast inundated jungles is very impressive. There appears to be a total absence of tree as well as land life. The chattering monkeys, the noisy parakeets and macaws, the rufus and campestris deer, which live and move swiftly in the crackling underbush, the whistle of the tapir to its mate, the scavenging wild pig, the scratching, burrowing tamandua, and the cave-dwelling armadillos, all retreat before the rising waters, and even the birds fly across the dim green ceiling without whistle or song. Only the swamp-loving snakes, the otters, the alligators, the dreaded electric eels and the clouds of insects seem oblivious of the steaming floods and the desolation.

Hour after hour of this sun-heat and silence, with the forest all around rising from a waste of stagnant water, followed by long nights spent in the cramped space of the canoe, with the yellow tropical moon silhouetting the lofty trees and forming ghostly patterns on the lanes of brackish flood, became so oppressive that more than once, in moments of weakness, I spoke loudly to banish the awful loneliness. These flooded areas, which often cover from twenty to a hundred square miles, are so common in the low-lying river valleys that the Turas boys paddled, munched their scanty food, slept and searched for the deep-water

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channel denoting the river in the silence and with the stoicism of the North American Indian.

Towards noon of the second day in this great swamp an incident occurred which nearly wrecked our small expedition. A snake from an overhanging bough dropped into the canoe while the paddlers were resting during the heat of midday. Deaths from the bite or sting of these reptiles are so frequent among the naked and thus unprotected savages that my Turas boys nearly capsized the canoe in their haste to get away from the convulsively twisting green body. They preferred the dangers which lurked unseen in the ooze-like water around, and were soon overboard.

It was no easy matter to kill this dangerous intruder, which turned out to be a *louro machaco*, or parrot-snake, so called because of its beautiful green skin. However, after partly wedging it against the side of the canoe with a heavy package, it was soon despatched by blows with the paddles and the skin secured as a trophy.

After an exciting moment such as this, one notices the oppressive heat of the Amazon forest. My very thin clothes were literally wringing wet with perspiration, and the possibility of the canoe being upset, with the consequent loss of both provisions and equipment, added a mental strain to the physical discomfort. This comparatively trifling exertion caused an unhealthy languor which lasted for some hours, and necessitated one of those ever-increasing doses of quinine which are at certain times a matter of life and death in remote Amazonia. We were now in the very heart of the swamp and creek region of the Upper Madeira Valley, beloved by the anaconda and alligator. Specimens of the former up to thirty-eight feet in length

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have been taken from the lakes and swamps adjacent to the main stream above Porto Velho. Some of these flooded jungles are said by the natives to be dangerous to navigate by canoe owing to the murderous inclinations of these huge reptiles. The anaconda is usually either of a brownish colour or striped with black and yellow. It crushes its prey by the pressure of its coils in order to break the bones and so facilitate the consumption, almost whole, of such beasts as the monkey, jaguar, tapir and tamandua. A human being once caught in these coils has no possible hope of rescue.

This snake incident, while nothing unusual in Amazonian travel, brought to the mind of the Turas the native legends of the *mae de agua*, or mother of the water, which, there can be little doubt, refer to these or similar reptiles, and for a time made them nervous of anything in sunlight, shadow or moonlight resembling these terrors of the swamps. Personally I was far too busily engaged attempting to rid myself of insect pests, which made every hour of both day and night an endless torment, to give more than passing thought to the larger but less irritating species.

On the fourth day patches of higher ground appeared, and we landed to make camp on what seemed to be an immense island. Wishing to stretch my legs after the many hours in the canoe, I unstrapped the Winchester from its improvised safety float and moved forward through one of the more open forest aisles, taking care to chop a piece of bark off a tree every hundred yards or so. It is surprising how easy it is to lose oneself in the tropical jungle. Quite recently, while accompanying a party of English travellers along the known trail to the Tarumá Falls, on the Rio

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Negro, the pathway through the jungle was somehow lost by the *caboclo* guides, and notwithstanding shots fired from rifles in order to get into touch with an advance party the track could not be found, and the whole party had to return to waiting launches without reaching the Falls, after spending nearly two hours in the forest.

Seeing nothing worth the expenditure of a valuable cartridge, as ammunition is extremely difficult to obtain even in the settlements, and almost impossible to carry in quantity owing to the difficulty of hiring either canoe men or carriers, I returned to the camp just as the blood-red orb of the westering sun dipped behind the flooded forest through which we had passed. There was that indefinable hush, noticed by all travellers in Equatorial forests, which momentarily precedes the brief twilight, and in this suspension of natural sound I heard the peculiar twang of a bow-string. This was followed by a curious choking cry and the sudden chattering of whole colonies of hitherto sleepy monkeys.

On reaching camp, only a few yards distant, one of the boys pointed to the ground under a tree, and in the half light it was just possible to see the huddled and impaled body of a furry guaribas, or howling monkey (*simia mycetes*), so named because of its curiously penetrating cry, caused by a shell-like growth in the throat. Closer inspection showed it to be of a reddish brown colour, with a tufted prehensile tail, a body about two feet long, large head, and five fingers on each hand. Only a flash of comprehension as to the different points of view regarding the killing of these animals enabled me to conceal the annoyance I felt when the proud hunter explained, simply and eagerly, that this

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particular species was difficult to shoot with bow and arrow because of its cunning, and that stewed and grilled monkey was the favourite food of his tribe.

A big fire was built and one of the cooking pots requisitioned. That night I tasted my first and last mouthful of monkey. The flavour is by no means disagreeable, but somehow I could not continue with the meal, and, later, was profoundly glad, for one of the boys lifted the monkey's hand from the stew-pot. It was no longer brown, but pale pink and like that of a child. The sight, and the relish with which the Indian boy commenced to devour it, caused such a feeling of nausea that a stiff glass of whisky from the precious flask had to be expended. Had I known then what awaited me among other tribes it would, perhaps, have been wise to school myself against the sickening feeling created by the mere sight of a monkey feast, so common among all the natives of Amazonia. As it was, sleep seemed impossible, for the feast went on half through the night, and I was glad to break camp in the bright sunlight of the tropical morning.

About midday we passed the mouth of a narrow stream which joins the Gy-Paraná on the south-west bank. Being unable, then or since, to find any map which gives it a name, it is shown on the chart reproduced in this volume as "Monkey River," because of a whole troop of spider monkeys inhabiting the lower branches of the surrounding trees. So shallow was the water of the stream some few miles farther on that the two boys had to get overboard and ease the *batalõe* over a succession of newly formed mudflats. This work induced the pitching of the tent and the making of camp some time before sunset, my intention being

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on the following day to search the country around, adjacent to the river bank, for signs of Indian trails, or any information which might be gleaned as to the presence of tribes in the locality. That night, however, notwithstanding a vigilant guard, taken in turns by myself and one of the Turas boys, some provisions and a hunting-knife left in the canoe were stolen, although, so far, there had been no sign of the presence of Indians, either friendly or hostile.

This camp, being of more than ordinary importance, deserves closer description. For some miles the river had been narrow, with the forest almost meeting overhead. At the place chosen, however, the tall aquatic grass and chaos of underbush had receded a little, leaving a red-brown bank, behind which stood the seemingly impenetrable and forbiddingly dark jungle. It was the one patch of mother earth upon which sunlight could play unrestricted by the amazing growth. For this reason it attracted my eye as a camping ground not to be lightly passed by.

The small waterproof tent was soon rigged, a fire lighted from the dry pith of rotting trees, and a meal prepared of canned salt beef, fruit, biscuits and black coffee. After doing justice to this sumptuous repast I lay down on a waterproof sheet to smoke, rest and think before making the customary notes regarding the day's work. The sunlight was of a deep red-gold, and caused the whole vista to embody something of the spirit of the tropical forest. Once, during boyhood days, I had seen at a travelling panorama a vivid scene (with effects) of Sir H. M. Stanley's first camp on the shores of the Central African lakes, and somehow this mental picture arose unbidden from the depths

Into the Heart of the

of the subconscious storehouse. With the exception of the lake there was a curious likeness to the artist's conception of Central Africa here in the Amazonian wilds.

It was at this camp that the arrangements broke down completely. When paying the debts of the Turas boys, and so taking them into my service, they had professed a readiness to scout through the forests in order to get into contact with the natives living or hunting in the neighbourhood. This part of the programme they now flatly refused to carry out, explaining that they would be killed and eaten, since the tribes around were hostile to their own, as well as to white men. This, combined with the loss of provisions, threatened to bring the expedition to a sudden and disastrous end. To use threats or actual force in order to drive them into the forest would, obviously, have been worse than useless, and the promise of reward was without other effect than to make them suspiciously morose.

In these circumstances it seemed useless to proceed further up-river, and, at the same time, to have left the camp and searched the surrounding forest myself would have been to court disaster. The canoe boys if left to themselves might prove treacherous, or, far more likely, be seized with panic and paddle off downstream, leaving me, possibly without food, to face a journey of 159 miles down a difficult river, with vast flooded areas or lakes, and with hostile Indians somewhere in the forests around. It turned out, later, that my Indian boys had recognized old war trails of other tribes.

There is a great deal of truth in the saying that

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necessity is the mother of invention, for while sitting on the edge of the canoe endeavouring to make up my mind to an undignified retreat the idea came which solved the problem. That night I armed myself with rifle and electric torch, placed a few unimportant trifles, including my last pocket-knife, in the canoe, and awaited the return of the marauding Indians. Several times sounds came from the thick bush around the camp and the temptation was strong to flood the scene with electric light. Anyone who has waited and watched throughout the night in similar circumstances will know how long the hours seem, and how unbearable is the tension.

When the moon rose and flooded the scene with light it seemed that the time had passed, but, with less straining of eyes and ears, the watch continued. Hour after hour went slowly by, and the damp caused an unpleasant and ominous shivering. Then came the first pale streaks of dawn; the miasmatic mist was banished from the river banks but still curled among the thick and rank vegetation. The forest awoke to life. Thoroughly disheartened and tired, I crawled on to the waterproof sheet and soon forgot the quest of new races of humanity.

CHAPTER IX

AMONG THE PARINTINTINS OF THE GY-PARANÁ

ABOUT two hours later full consciousness was aroused by a tug on the sheet. The boy who had been given the name of "Mosquito," on account of his thin limbs, was gabbling and pointing excitedly through the opening in the tent. Rising quickly to my feet, with the dazed impression of having overslept, the surprise was great when I saw the other boy, "Unani Assu" (tall man), hiding behind a tree trunk. My eyes travelled round for the reason, which was less than thirty yards away. On the opposite bank of the river was a short, thick-set savage of a very pale bronze colour and entirely nude, standing, bow in hand, on the river bank. Taking up my shaving-glass as a peace offering, I left the tent, called loudly, and held my hands up as a sign that I was unarmed.

Almost instantly an arrow, from somewhere among the trees on the opposite bank, dropped short into the river in front of the camp. Realizing the danger of our position in the event of an attack from more than one side, I determined not to provoke hostilities. Instead, however, I returned to the tent, hastily secured any attractive articles I could lay hands on, and held them up for the Indians to see. This time no arrows came over, and I placed the trinkets on the edge of the river and retired to the camp on the higher ground behind.

For some considerable time no effort was made by the Indians to secure the presents, and I used the

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interval to load both rifle and revolver, and pile up the stores on the edge of the little igarapé. Then, almost without warning, the savage whom I had seen on the opposite bank appeared in the camp clearing. It was an awkward moment. Somehow I felt that from the dark recesses of the forest around unseen eyes were watching my slightest movement. Again I waved my hand above my head and pointed to the presents, some fifteen yards away, at the water's edge.

Evidently the Indian had either waded or swum across, for his hair was wet. Both of my own boys had hidden themselves in terror, and, unfortunately, I could not speak a word of Guarani, which is usually understood by the tribes of these forests. However, the Indian cautiously approached the gifts, and, when sufficiently near, snatched them and retreated to the edge of the jungle. By this time I had discovered the presence of "Mosquito" behind a neighbouring tree, and hauled him out into the open. Telling him that we should certainly all be killed unless he tried to make friends with the Indian, I ordered him to shout, in Guarani, that we were friends and needed food.

The Indian halted suddenly in the shadow of the trees, and my heart started thumping uncomfortably. Then I tried to carry on a conversation by means of signs, and gradually drew the savage forward by offering a tablet of scented soap. Although sorely tempted by curiosity, this wary Indian would not feed from the hand, and the soap had to be laid on the ground. A kind of friendship thus established, it did not take long to explain that we desired food (which was the simplest thing to describe and the most likely

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to be understood). This appeared to be promised, and the Indian disappeared into the *matto*.

A few seconds later three arrows fell with remarkable precision a little to the left of the camp. They were evidently fired at a high angle, either on account of the range or else to make them stick upright in the earth. Later I secured these trophies, which turned out to be beautifully carved and decorated with feathers. What at first seemed a hostile action of base ingratitude and treachery, suddenly assumed a more reassuring aspect. All three arrows had been fired separately and had struck the earth within a yard of each other, well to the left of my tent. Had the intent been murderous these arrows would either have been aimed at myself or else would have come to earth in different parts of the little camp. Evidently they were intended as return gifts, and I felt decidedly more comfortable than during the preceding half-hour.

Some time later the thick-set Indian again appeared, after shouting several times from the obscurity of the forest what sounded like "Aemu," and receiving a yell in reply. He brought with him a spider monkey, from which every shred of hair had been burned off. Following him at a respectful distance were two other members of the tribe, one of whom was armed with a long blow-pipe.

Motioning them to lay down their arms, which, curiously, they did without hesitation (except the man carrying the blow-pipe), I bestowed further presents, which left me minus fork and spoon. Confidence was slowly increased, and in less than half-an-hour these three wild-looking men were examining everything in camp.



A GROUP OF GIANT CASHIBOS, OR VAMPIRE INDIANS.

The Chief (wearing a headdress; is the tallest man of the tribe, and is roughly $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet.
Their spears are 14 feet long.

DWARF INDIANS OF MATTO GROSSO.

With pale-skinned Caripuna girl.

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It appeared, from the limited conversation I was able to conduct by means of signs, supplemented by Mosquito's monosyllabic Guarani, that they were of a tribe called Taipehe, which I afterwards learned was the native name for Parintintin, and that they came from a *tapiry*, or hunting and fishing lodge away from the village (or *maloccas*). In order to show their pleasure when given the merest trifle, they beat their breasts, stamped their feet and repeated the word "Aemu," which, as far as I can learn, means "companion." It was quite evident that, even if they had previously seen a white man, which is doubtful, they had never before examined one closely. The most curious feature of all was their absolute refusal to receive any gifts direct from my hands, or to approach closer than about three yards.

No objection was made to my examining the blow-pipe carried by a young brave who could not have been more than fifteen years of age. This weapon was made from the stem of a palm about ten feet long, the pith having been cleaned out, leaving a smooth, polished bore. Any curve there may have been was counteracted by a small inner palm stem having been pushed into a larger tube. The poisoned darts were carried in a kind of ornamented quiver slung from the pipe itself.

Being inclined to test how far their friendship extended, I removed one of the darts, which I well knew to have had its fine, almost needle-like point steeped in curari, and pretended that I was about to test its sharpness on my thumb. The young brave did not move a muscle, but the older man gesticulated, and the boy made signs for me to lay the blow-pipe and darts on the ground so that he might pick them up. This I did,

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and after repeated calls of "Ye Aemu," which I believe means, "We are companions," they disappeared into the forest.

That night we left the tent standing but lay in the canoe. I remained awake and on guard the whole night. Next morning, however, I dozed for a few hours and then lay down and wrote up my notes. On the following day the Indians again appeared, and demanded more presents. Having exhausted nearly all the special "trade" trinkets brought with me, I gave them each a soiled shirt, with which they appeared to be immensely pleased, although they did not put them on.

Although it was evident that these Indians could not be considered either dwarfs or pygmies, they certainly belonged to a little-known tribe, or sub-tribe, of exceptionally small stature. It was quite impossible to attempt the taking of measurements, but, judging by the eye, they ranged from 4 feet 4 inches to 4 feet 6 inches in height, but were exceedingly sturdy, with abnormally broad chests. Their faces would not be considered flat, or Mongolian, and their eyes were not of the oblique, Asiatic order.

With the exception of a cord round their waists, and a cylindrical tube of palm leaves, they were completely nude. Both arms and legs were, however, bound with straw, or *embira*. In colour they were a pale bronze, but much lighter in shade than the Mundurucus of the Tapajós. Their comparatively light complexions, as well as their shortness of stature, were, probably, due to residence for unknown centuries in the dim forest away from the sunlight. Not only did they screw up their eyes to a painful extent in the

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glare of the river clearing, but persistently turned their backs upon the glittering orb whenever it showed through the canopy of trees.

That they were of the fierce Parintintin group there is now not the slightest doubt, although at the time of my meeting with them in the jungle of the Gy-Paraná these tribes were known only by repute, and I had no means of ascertaining definitely. Had I known then what came to my knowledge much later, I should certainly have allowed these treacherous and warlike Indians to have remained undisturbed in their remote forests. As it was, however, by an elaborate use of the language of signs my desire to visit their village was explained.

This suggestion caused much talking among themselves, and apparently no decision. It was remarkable how high-pitched were the tones in which they carried on conversation, and how little these tones were varied. I realized that there was actually a certain element of risk, because *caboclo* rubber and Brazil-nut gatherers, in forests far less remote, had frequently been killed by the savage tribes who inhabit these leafy fastnesses, many of whom are still ignorant of the existence of white men. One such case had occurred while I was in Manáos, the body having been found on the banks of the Caura river by another *seringuero*, partly decomposed, and minus the head and right leg. It must, however, be confessed that the full extent of the danger was then unknown to me, although, evidently, this was not the case with my two mosquito-like canoe boys. They tried the old argument, first, that the *maloccas* of the Indians were many suns distant, and then, finding that this information did not move me,

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that we should all be eaten for "the strength we contained." This latter assertion they tried to demonstrate by biting their own arms.

My particular anxiety was to avoid anything savouring of compulsion, because I realized that in the thick forest we should be entirely at the mercy of these savages, who, like all others in the Amazon region, were undoubtedly treacherous. To murder openly might be a little difficult, because of the inferiority of the weapons they carried, although peculiarly adapted to jungle warfare, but nothing would be easier than for them to lead us into the heart of the great twilight jungle and there arrange an ambush. The method of attack preferred by many tribes of the great forests is similar to that so frequently adopted in the past by the Ashantis and the natives of the Congo. Lanes are cut through the thick undergrowth bordering the narrow rivers and the natural paths through the jungle, and when the exploring party advances it is met by an unexpected shower of poisoned darts and arrows that continues until a searching rifle fire has driven the natives back into the shelter of the almost impenetrable forest.

It transpired later, however, that one of this tribe's favourite methods of ridding themselves of enemies is to dip a large number of palm needles in a strong poison and then to strew them, point uppermost, over the jungle paths used by their barefooted victims. Even the half-caste rubber gatherers move continuously through the forest with bare feet, because of the hindering effect of foot-gear of any kind, the damp mould which forms overnight on leather, and the insects (termites) which will destroy a pair of riding-

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boots in a few hours if inadvertently exposed to their activities.

Eventually, after an irritating half-hour wasted, the problem solved itself. The oldest of the trio, who was by far the most fierce-looking and ugly, pointed to the canoe, and at the same time signed that they would accompany us. After paddling up the narrow and now much-obstructed river for nearly two hours I began to wonder if this was only a ruse to mislead us until an opportunity presented itself for their escape during the approaching night. About an hour before sunset, however, the older man, whose hair was cut in a fringe round the front of his head, pointed to the bank, and, after forcing the canoe through sharp-bladed aquatic grass, we landed in a peculiarly dark belt of forest.

In about two hours the sun would have sunk below the endless forest and the short Equatorial twilight have given place to darkness. In these circumstances I was reluctant to proceed further that night, and tried to explain this, but the language of signs and symbols is much more restricted than anyone would believe who has not tried to explain himself in this way for one whole day, and it occurred to me then that training in a school for the deaf and dumb should be part of the curriculum for any traveller or explorer aspiring to investigate off the beaten track, where guide-books and glossaries of terms and phrases do not offer the slightest assistance.

Hauling the canoe up on to the bank and covering it with branches, we shouldered our packages, much against the wishes of the canoe boys, and plunged into the dark and somewhat forbidding-looking forest.

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At first I tried to remember certain prominent trees, fallen and ant-eaten trunks, dips in the growth-encumbered and invisible earth, in case a hasty retreat to the river became necessary. Very soon, however, the impossibility of the task became apparent. After committing to memory a certain palm the same variety in almost the same position would loom out of the green twilight a few hundred yards farther on. Suddenly I remembered my pocket compass, and thenceforward noted each change of direction from the river, feeling less dependent upon that unknown quantity—the goodwill of a savage tribe somewhere in the forest ahead.

When the dim light commenced to get more and more shadowy I moved up closer to the three guides, partly to prevent any treacherous act, and also because of the difficulty in preventing nasty falls over fallen trees and of catching feet, clothes and head-gear in trailing creepers. Just before the thick pall of darkness made movement in the forest impossible we came to a small partial clearing. The trees were farther apart and there was less underbush. It was evident that the path through the jungle by which we had come was a recognized route between the river and the native village, but so narrow and tortuous was it that only an Indian versed in forest craft would either have noticed it from the stream or been able to follow it through the almost impenetrable bush on either hand.

On arriving in the clearing we were almost instantly surrounded by a number of dark figures, among whom, in the failing light, it was impossible to distinguish either colour or sex. The eldest of our savage guides

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pointed to a low opening in one of the beehive-shaped palm huts, several of which could now be distinguished in bare outline among the trees. Not wishing to appear distrustful, I bent low and entered, after telling my boys to erect the little waterproof ridge-tent used for sleeping purposes. Inside the *malocca*, as these native houses are called, all was at first pitch darkness except in the lurid glow from three or four small fires burning in different corners. Then, as my eyes grew accustomed to the smoky atmosphere and weird firelight, figures could be seen moving about in groups, and the size of the hut, which seemed to be about 35 feet long by 18 feet broad and 12 feet high, became visible. It was evident that several families were living in the one hut, each having their allotted area of mud floor and their own fire, which is continually kept alight notwithstanding the almost stifling heat and bad ventilation. There was, on one side, a large raised platform made of thin branches bound together with dried grass, and reached by a half-section of palm stem with holes cut in it to form a crude ladder, only suitable for naked feet. This was the dais of the chief, and the space beneath it was reserved for his family. From the fact that at least one of the other five communal huts also had a platform it would appear, either that the medicine man shared this privilege with the chief of the tribe, or family, for there are no distinct and homogeneous native races in Amazonia, or else that this village contained two families, each with their chief.

Near to this platform was a *manguaré*, or combined forest telegraph and musical instrument. It consisted of two pieces of hollowed tree trunk, one shorter than the other, and so fashioned as to produce different

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sounds when struck, like a gong, with a short club, one end of which had apparently been dipped in the latex of the rubber-tree and afterwards bound with the strands of a palm. The two sections of hollow tree were suspended by thongs from a cross-beam forming the main support of the thatched roof of the hut. These *manguarés* are used to beat time for the native dances, and when struck have a penetrating and sonorous sound. A similar appliance on a somewhat larger scale, and suspended from a tree outside the hut, was used as the tocsin of war, or alarm bell. Signals can be transmitted by the *manguaré* through from twelve to sixteen miles of forest, the greater distance being only possible in the stillness of the night. When heard at long range each blow has a peculiarly distinct note. The top of each hollow tube in the hut was ornamented with a human skull, from which all the teeth had been extracted for necklaces. These skulls were relics of enemies killed in the tribal warfare which here, as elsewhere in the remote forests, appeared to be almost continuous, and takes the form of feuds which have been carried on for centuries. This intertribal warfare probably accounted for the reluctance of the canoe boys to scout through unknown forests which might or might not be inhabited by tribes hostile to their own.

After a few minutes in the foul atmosphere of this hut, and nearly choked by the fumes from the wood fires, I was glad to crawl out by the low opening and to breathe in even the damp and somewhat rank night air of the forest. Not knowing whether the *maloccas* of this tribe were as verminous as the mud huts of the Aymara Indians of the Bolivian tableland, in which it had been my lot to shelter for a whole night years

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previously, owing to one of those sudden and fierce storms which sweep across the roof of the New World, I gave myself the luxury of a complete change of undergarments.

The problem which now presented itself was to sleep or not to sleep. It was easy to decide that the night watch should be divided between the three of us, but quite another thing to slumber peacefully trusting to the vigilance and honesty of one native, albeit semi-civilized and of a different tribe, to protect vital supplies against the depredations of other natives who were totally uncivilized. The result was a wakeful night made more uneasy by swarms of mosquitoes and insects, the latter being of that species (jigger) which get under the human skin, set up chronic irritation and, in the absence of medical supplies, have to be removed with the point of a sterilized needle.

When daylight eventually streamed through the rift in the pall of trees I realized to the full that nights in the Amazon forest were more likely to be of the Dante than the Arabian variety. However, it was not long before reward came. Food had been sent into the tent almost before sunrise by the eldest of our three guides on the previous day. It was an unsavoury mess made of a kind of arrowroot, prominent among which were portions of a large frog, considered a delicacy among many of the Amazon tribes. Besides this, however, there was a plentiful supply of maracaja, the luscious fruit of the passion-flower. Not wishing to appear distrustful, I buried the former—furtively, because of children's eyes peering through the opening or under the canvas of the tent—and made a great show of eating and enjoying the latter, much to my

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regret later in the day when I had to seek the aid of chlorodyne.

This tribe were all of medium or even small stature, although muscularly strong. They appear to live almost exclusively on game, fish, nuts, roots and fruit. At a short distance from the *maloccas* small clearings had been made with infinite labour in which bananas, cotton, yuca, yams and mandioca were being grown. Both night and day they slept and moved about in a state of complete nudity, with the exception of the women, who wore a very small tanga of woven cotton thread or other fibre dyed with the sap of the urucu. These latter make baskets and other articles of straw and wicker (*cipo*), hammocks, and crude earthen pots. They pull out the hairs on both face and body with pincer-like shells found in the mud of the igarapés and forest lakes.

Their fishing and war canoes are made of light hollowed trees, or bark, formed into shape by the heat of fires. The Parintintins seem to have a natural gift for drawing, and decorate even their arrows, which they call *taquaras*, with pictures of birds, reptiles and beasts. With these weapons they kill big game as well as fish and birds, using the feathers of the latter upon their heavier war spears and bows, as well as for personal adornment during their barbaric orgies. Crowns and girdles of brilliant plumes are then worn by all the braves. Some have tails of the macaw hanging down their backs, and others, including some of the women, have pictures of these birds tattooed on their faces and bodies. During these weird ceremonies the women wear broad tangas of straw, dyed vivid colours, which extend from elbow to thigh.

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The Parintintins are accustomed to spend days away from their *maloccas* on the warpath, as well as on hunting and fishing excursions. For these last two purposes they build *tapirys* on the shores of the lakes and igarapés. These erections consist of a platform raised above the water on poles and sheltered from the tropical rains by a palm-thatch roof. Around the *maloccas* curious carvings representing men and beasts ornament the trees, and appear to be used not only for amusing the scores of little naked children, but also for teaching them to shoot at objects with bow and blow-pipe, the natural curve of the tree making marksmanship more difficult.

A curious and noteworthy feature is the entire absence of either beards or moustaches on the faces of old men. Evidently the hairs are extracted when they first make their appearance on the faces of the men and the bodies of the women. The Parintintin language would appear to belong to the linguistic group called "Tupi," and differs entirely from the Lingoa Geral of the old semi-civilized inhabitants of the Madeira—further proof that they have never come into close contact either with white men or the semi-civilization of the main rivers. Tupi has much in common with Guarani.

Their arrow-heads are made either of hard wood steeped in poison, or of the sharp teeth of the coatia (big guinea-pig). Necklets of these teeth, and of those extracted from the skulls of enemies killed in battle, alligators and jaguars, are worn by the women and children.

Like other Amazonian races, they are very superstitious, and may be called moon-worshippers, believing

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in good and bad spirits of light and darkness. At night they placed meat and fruit on the trees for the sustenance of the evil ones that they might not attack the *maloccas*. No man was allowed to possess a wife until he had killed some wild beast, the name of which he henceforward bore through life. One of their weird night orgies, which it appears is closely allied to their worship of the moon, I was privileged to witness on my third night among the Parintintins.

It commenced with repeated war-cries of "Ya taipheh!" which, according to information obtained later, means: "We are the Parintintins." These weird cries in the silent forest are followed by mimic wailing by the women in the shadow of the trees. The dancers, gaily decorated with feathers, then begin grotesque displays of stabbing, with long, tufted spears, the dark patches caused by the shadows of the trees or the passage of clouds across the moon. Then the confused mass of naked savages suddenly forms into a line of archers, with the tufted spears left behind, stuck point upwards in the moonlit clearing. This line of warriors advances and retreats, circles, and breaks into pairs, all the while going through the actions of firing arrows, yelling and stamping the feet.

This warlike display, which made a barbaric picture in the little clearing with its dark background of forest, seemed suddenly to change from war to peace. The moonlight no longer silhouetted a line of dark figures with spears or bows, but couples playing weird music on bamboo flutes to the accompaniment of stamping feet.

This was followed by a feast of monkey, lizard (iguana), farina, and a curiously bitter and highly intoxicating liquor called *embo*. The memorable spec-

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tacle of the dance became an orgy equally as unforgettable, in which men, women and even children joined. This in turn gave place to a debauch impossible to describe. Happily the moon sailed low over the forest and the clearing lay in the shadow. Quarrels occurred, in one of which the face of one man was half torn away by a blow from a stone axe.

Seeing that matters might take an ugly turn at any moment, I used the shadows cast by the trees to collect my two boys and retreat into the banana grove which commanded a view of the tent. It was already past midnight, but I dare not either doze where I lay or return to the lighted tent. For four hours the cries, shrieks and occasional chanting went on, but with the first pale streaks of dawn, lemon-yellow in a pale green sky, the sounds died away, and I returned shivering with ague to the tent and my store of quinine.

On the following day the whole tribe was sullen, morose and bad-tempered. One or other of the younger braves would come to the tent and demand presents, afterwards twanging their bows as if aiming arrows at the encampment. My two canoe boys were so scared that they would not leave the vicinity of the tent. On this day I witnessed a burial ceremony. Whether or not the victim had been killed in one of the quarrels of the previous night cannot be told. The corpse was carried out of the *malocca* and the head severed from the trunk, the former being carried back into the hut and the latter being thrown into the forest to be cleaned either by the beasts or the vulture-like *urubus*.

A surprise came early in the afternoon of the fifth day. A native girl appeared from a hut and walked

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across the clearing into the cotton plantation on the opposite side. Her skin was almost white in the sunlight. Closer inspection, however, showed it to be of a smoky yellow colour, much lighter than that of any other members of the tribe so far seen. She, also, wore no clothes beyond the small tanga. After a series of questions it appeared that the Parintintins obtain both wives and slaves during their forays, and that this girl was of another tribe which inhabits the forest far to the southward. Beyond the vague assurance that she came from the south no more definite information could be obtained.

A similar discovery has, quite recently, been made by an officer of the Indian Service named Curt, who, at the present time, is engaged in trying to bring this fierce tribe within the pale of civilization.

Having made an over-lavish contribution to the feast of the previous night, food once more became a problem second only to that of getting safely away from the Parintintin village. I saw quite clearly that our lives depended upon the daily distribution of presents, many of which would have been useless to the Indians in the absence of anyone to show them how to make use of them. One day I refused to give any more, mainly because there was little left, even of my original stock of food and clothes. The temper of the tribe changed from that moment, and in genuine alarm I promised a big distribution if they would carry my tent and heavier packages back to the canoe. To this, however, they would not at first agree, asking me to remain with them and to use my rifle in battle.

This gave me the opportunity I sought. Packed away in a valise I had a small 22-bore sporting-gun

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with detachable butt. Telling them that if they conveyed my packages back to the canoe I would give them a stick-that-spoke eventually so aroused the cupidity of the chief that they assented. My relief was great, and that night I divided the few important items of my kit and packed them in my rucksack, together with some food and medicines.

On the following morning, true to their word, at least half the tribe followed us into the jungle on the way back to the river. I noticed, however, that beyond a small package of food my two canoe boys were carrying nothing. From that moment I knew that only strong action would get us down the river alive. When we were about what I judged to be half-way, the chief, a wrinkled old warrior with the thin, bony legs of beri-beri, asked me to show him the stick-that-spoke. This I flatly refused to do, saying that all sticks spoke in my hands; whereupon he scornfully picked up a rotting branch and handed it to me. Feeling for my revolver I fired through the pocket of my jacket while holding the twig in my opposite hand. This simple manoeuvre so impressed the Parintintins that, although several of them scowled at me and drew back their bows, nothing more was said until we reached the river and the canoe.

When the brushwood with which the canoe had been covered was removed and all was ready to depart I slipped the shot-gun out of the valise and handed it to the chief. Even after six days of intercourse the suspicious old Indian would not take it from my hand, but motioned me to show him how to use it. This I did in front of a half-menacing line of savages, but took care to leave only sporting cartridges from which

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I had extracted the powder and bullets during the previous night. Getting into the canoe, I kept my revolver ready, and it was lucky I did so, because scarcely had the paddles dipped in the river before a shower of poisoned arrows splashed into the water around, and one stuck, quivering, into the woodwork of the canoe.

It was a ticklish moment. Seized with panic, Mosquito plied his paddle vigorously, while the other boy seemed paralysed with fear. The result was that the canoe curved out into the stream, instead of moving away from the Indians, who could not follow along the forest-encumbered bank. I fired three shots into the bush behind which these treacherous Indians had taken shelter, and whether it was the reports that broke the spell or the kick I gave cannot be said, but the next moment the canoe shot away down-stream, propelled by the two thoroughly scared boys. For nearly two hours they paddled hard, causing the small craft to skim over the dark, placid surface on which were mirrored the million leaves of the forest walls.

About the weary days paddling down-stream in the Turkish bath-like atmosphere of this central forest region little need be said here, except that not a glimpse was obtained of other Indians or their *maloccas*. The Parintintins, who inhabit the whole region between the Marmellos and the Gy-Paraná rivers, prefer the remote forests, lakes and igarapés. They are still very largely unsubdued, as will be seen from the following vivid account, given me personally, during subsequent travels in Amazonia, by Senhor J. Gondim of the Indian Service, describing in detail recent efforts to get into friendly touch with this savage tribe of the great forest wilderness.

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE WHITE MAN & THE SAVAGE

LIVING in the more remote forests of the Madeira Valley, between the Marmellos, Maicy and Gy-Paraná rivers, the Parintintin Indians, until quite recently, had never been brought into contact with civilization. These elusive and exceedingly savage tribes, who it is now known move their *maloccas* frequently in the enormous area of unknown forest, river and swamp of this great central region of perpetual twilight, had once or twice been accidentally met by isolated explorers and rubber prospectors, several of whom had been attacked and killed. Even their exact habitat was a mystery, and only the brief information of the few white men who had penetrated into these distant regions and come out alive had reached the frontier of civilization.

For this reason preliminary explorations had to be made by officers of the Indian Service over a wide area in order to discover evidence of the presence of the Parintintins, in the form of war-trails, abandoned *maloccas* and recent camps, before the difficult and dangerous task of getting into direct contact with these fierce tribes could be properly commenced.

The first post of the Indian Service in this region was established on 24th March 1921, in the loop of a big curve on the Middle Maicy, a tributary of the Madeira. In the surrounding forest dwelt a

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large tribe of Pirahan Indians (Turas), who had lived for centuries in continual warfare with their nomadic neighbours, the Parintintins. The fights between these two tribes often take place on the open river, where, in their crude canoes, made out of hollowed tree trunks, they make fierce attacks upon each other with poisoned arrows fired at close range. Every expedition by one side means a retaliatory attack by the other, and so the feud goes on.

With the foundation of this post on the Middle Maicy the Pirahans are gradually ceasing their bloody wars on neighbouring tribes, and are settling down to hunting and agriculture with the implements and utensils provided from the post. Having accomplished this preliminary work, another auxiliary post was founded on a tributary of the Maicy called the Maicy-Mirimé. This little fort with its stockade stands on a high bank at the junction of the river with an igarapé called Novo de Janeiro, about nine days' voyage by canoe from the post on the Middle Maicy. On the arrival of the small garrison here the commanding officer established what is known as "Attraction Posts" on the banks of the Igarapés Macacos (monkeys) and Traheras, and also on the war-trails used by the Indians in the neighbourhood of the main post.

These attraction posts consist merely of small mud huts covered with zinc, in which are placed baskets of woven grass, clothes of bright colours, basins, plates, spoons and other useful articles. Outside the little huts sign-posts are erected pointing to the path which will lead the Indians to the post. In this way the savages are attracted by the presents and gradually induced to come right to the stockade for a parley.

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A few days after the establishment of these attraction posts in the forests it was discovered that all the presents left therein had been taken, and, in return, decorated arrows were found sticking in the mud floor. The Indians had, however, exercised great care in concealing the paths by which they had approached in order to prevent themselves being followed to their *maloccas*.

The restocking of these posts without any attempt being made to track the Indians to their villages gradually instilled in the minds of the Parintintins the idea that the garrison was friendly, and within a few weeks they no longer tried to conceal the paths by which they came and went. As a proof of friendship they also left in the mud huts arrows decorated with the feathers of such beautiful birds as the japú, arara and mutum, as well as various little objects made out of the carved teeth of the coatia and jaguar.

The first actual meeting between the garrison of the post and the Parintintins occurred on 24th March 1922. An assistant (Raymundo Baptista) entered the forest in order to inspect one of the little attraction posts and was surprised by a group of Indians who were there at the time. Realizing the impossibility of defending himself in the event of an attack, Baptista started to run in the direction of the main post, passing almost through the group of Indians, who, until then, seemed dazed by surprise; but this passed quickly and, levelling their bows, they discharged several arrows at the fugitive, who, however, arrived safely behind the stockade.

After this meeting the Indians disappeared completely for several weeks, hiding themselves in the almost impenetrable forest, stretching away for hundreds

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of miles round the post. Occasionally they used a hallow bamboo flute and simulated the cries of birds. Then they appeared suddenly on the opposite bank of the igarapé shouting "Pum! pum! pum!" and discharging showers of poisoned arrows in the direction of the stockade. After again disappearing for some time they made a determined attack on the post from a small piece of land less than eighty yards from the barbed-wire stockade. Volleys of arrows were fired all over the enclosure, and when any of the garrison showed themselves the Indians broke out into their customary war-cries. Some leaped into the water of the creek with the apparent intention of crossing to the post, and others hid themselves in a big tree called *tareyziero* (arvore) from amidst the branches of which they gazed curiously at the fort.

This went on almost uninterruptedly until the morning of 8th May, when Senhor Curt, the officer in charge of the post, was surprised by a confused clamour of voices coming from the edge of the igarapé. It was the Parintintins, who, for the first time, advanced towards the hutments. The garrison, screened by the strong wooden walls of the fort, watched the savages force the gateway of the stockade and cautiously enter the compound with their bows in readiness.

It was an awkward moment. To have fired on these Indians would have meant undoing all the good work accomplished in the previous weeks, so a show of force was made by the rifles of the garrison and the Indians withdrew from the enclosure, remaining, however, a short distance away. The Commander then entered the compound with several presents in his hands, and called the savages in a friendly manner. Receiving

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no response, however, he walked to the open gateway and there left a basket of knives, axes and a bundle of thick string, retiring immediately inside the fort.

The Indians then approached the gateway and secured the basket and its contents, taking it to the edge of the igarapé, where, according to custom, they gave vent to their war-cries. Afterwards they climbed into the branches of trees and discharged arrows, which, however, fell short of the post. After several minutes of anxiety three of the Parintintins returned and, keeping a short distance away, began shouting to the garrison and making signs for more presents, repeating the word "Akanitara" (diadem).

One of these, a very light-skinned youth of about fifteen years of age, was violently opposed to the conciliatory attitude of his companions. His face was a study of barbaric fury, and when he saw one of the Indians taking from his head a dress of feathers with the object of offering it to the garrison, he went through the actions of discharging arrows (having none actually to fire), stamping his feet and yelling defiance.

As the two others asked for presents in return for the Akanitara, Commander Curt went to the river's edge and threw a basket of machetes into the water, telling the Indians to go in and fetch them. For some minutes the savages stood still, hesitating. Then one of their number jumped into the shallow creek, recovered the basket and distributed the contents. In return for these they placed a head-dress of feathers on the ground outside the compound, giving the garrison to understand that they must fetch it. Commander Curt replied that he would not do so because several minutes before arrows had been discharged at the post.

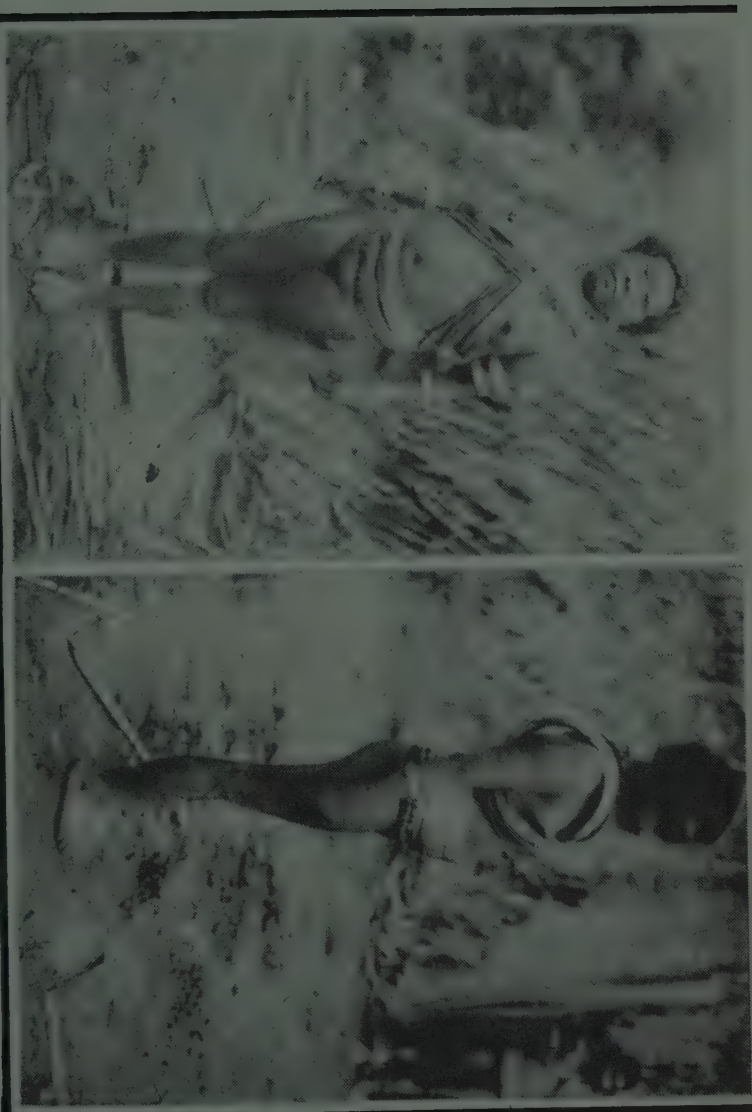
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The Parintintins now made use of a cunning ruse to guarantee his safety. They signed to him to collect some more presents, and during the interval they commenced dancing and singing, holding their bows upright, one having the head-dress tied to his long bow. Two other braves on each side shouted their battle-cry, and while all four danced *with their backs to the fort*, a fifth, who was unarmed, watched the movements of the garrison.

Commander Curt left the fort and carried the presents to the point indicated. The Indians then stopped dancing, and one of their number crossed the river to fetch the basket of gifts. In the meantime, however, other Indians on the opposite bank, who had remained hidden, rushed to the water's edge and discharged two arrows, which, luckily, fell short. Curt then gave the Indians to understand that he would give no more presents, but the savage who had crossed the river now approached and by signs gave the Commander to understand that it was not he who had fired the arrows.

Thus encouraged, four other Indians crossed the river and joined the one in the gateway of the post. The oldest of these now took the feather crown from his head and threw it to the officer, who caught it, and, wishing to make some return, held out two bead necklaces to the Indian. They drew back, however, exclaiming "Embombo!" which is apparently derived from the Tupi word meaning "play."

One Indian inquired if the white men had come from above or below the *Caiary* (Madeira), and what was the name of their country. He was told that the garrison had come from below the river and that their



ITOGAPUK GIRLS.

Notice the curious bunch round the body and arms. The indentations made in the flesh above the wrists by these amulets, show clearly in the right hand picture.

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country was far away in the direction of the rising sun. Another asked if one of the younger men at the post was the Commander's son! When answered in the negative, and told that wives and families had been left very far behind, he appeared surprised.

When the Parintintins returned a few days later no arrows were discharged, and after announcing their coming with cries from the forest they advanced right up to the stockade. When asked if they were hungry, the answer was a comical gesture made by one who put his hand grotesquely over his empty stomach. Food was brought, and Curt ate a little of each dish so that the Indians could see that it did not contain poison. For some minutes no one would approach to take the food, notwithstanding their hunger. Then a young savage came up in absolute confidence and received, personally, the desired food.

Mr Curt tried to maintain a face-to-face conversation with the Indian, who, however, scornfully retired with the food to the others waiting outside the stockade. After eating, singing and dancing they again disappeared into the forest.

This was the first known occasion on which a Parintintin Indian received peacefully any object direct from the hands of civilized man. After this they came often to the post, and while some waited patiently to be received in the compound, others, armed with heavy wooden clubs, tried to destroy the stockade. On these occasions the more war-like Indians were warned by the armed section of the garrison, and only those who left their weapons outside were granted admission to the enclosure of the post.

From this time onwards the Parintintins roamed

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about outside the establishment, receiving gifts from the staff, and giving in exchange some of their own personal adornments. At the beginning they were timid, but after a few weeks gained confidence, and maintained long conversations by the aid of signs and drawings with members of the garrison. It was interesting to observe the trouble they went to in order to make themselves understood by both signs and Tupi words. When they saw that a member of the staff did not understand them, they repeated their words and carried on dumb show with great ability.

On one occasion they came, accompanied by their women-folk, and gave an exhibition of their tribal dances, which began with the Indians in pairs, advancing, turning and stamping with their feet, while playing on bamboo flutes. Then the musical instruments were laid aside and the dancing became a mimic battle, each side advancing in line and suddenly kneeling or lying full length on the ground and going through the actions of firing arrows or using the blow-pipe.

Whenever they arrived at the post it became the custom to leave their arms on the river bank and to hold their hands above their heads before the gate of the stockade was opened. It frequently happened, however, that among the groups visiting the post were one or two more savage than the remainder, and these often threatened members of the garrison, who, however, knew exactly how to avert the danger and mollify the worst instincts of the savage. Among those who have so far visited the post is a boy of about fifteen or sixteen years of age who is very much lighter skinned than all the others and has entirely different features.

The above account of the recent work of the Indian

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Service in these remote forests is substantially as told to me by the official named on the Rio Negro in December 1922. It should be noted here that all this preliminary exploration and subsequent dangerous work was needed to get into contact with one savage tribe on the Maicy-Mirimé, a river not yet marked on any ordinary map. It only needs to be added that there is still nearly a million square miles of unknown territory in the Amazon Valley in order to refute the oft-repeated but quite erroneous statement that there is nothing left in the world to explore.

This almost white Parintintin boy corresponds to several others of different tribes which I personally came across during the months of my wandering in the Amazon forests. Whether or not there is a story of pillage, capture and outrage on some white woman of an outlying station behind these curiosities of colour and race it is impossible to say. It is, however, known that several thousand Spanish women were captured by the Huambisa tribes of north-eastern Peru several centuries ago. The lapse of time would, however, have caused the white blood to be submerged, and recent attacks and captures would introduce only a *caboclo* strain into the pure Indian.

So startling is the sight of an almost white skin among a group of naked bronze figures that there can be no question as to slight differences of shade. The features also appear to be different, according not only to my own observations but also to those of others. The complicating factor is the entire absence of any memory among these white Indians of relatives who were foreign to the tribe. When questioned themselves they realize only that they are of a lighter colour,

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without being able to assign any reason for it. The theory that the eating of salt produces fair skins and hair among European people cannot be in any way connected with these single specimens among the bronze tribes of Amazonia.

In this connection it may be of interest to give here, with some reserve, the account of a supposed white tribe in north-eastern Peru from Sir Clements Markham's *List of Tribes of the Amazon Valley*, compiled from many sources, and published in 1910 by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is stated that the Mayorunas tribes of the Ucayali-Yavari region "have white skins and are more like English than even Spaniards. They wander through the forests hunting, and do not go much to the rivers. They are supposed to be descended from Spanish soldiers of Ursula's expedition, but this is improbable. When the Inca Pachacuti conquered the Chancas, a part of that nation fled to Muyumbamba, and the people of the country, fleeing before the new-comers, settled on the Ucayali and Yavari. This is probably the origin of the Mayorunas or Mururunas (men of Muya). They have a strange and painful way of pulling out their beards. They take two shells, which they use as tweezers, and pull out the hairs one by one, making such grimaces that the sight of it moves to laughter and at the same time to pity. They are sometimes called Barbudos and are very numerous. They are taller than most of the other tribes and go perpetually naked. They are war-like and are in amity with no other tribe. They do not use bows and arrows, but only spears, lances, clubs and cerbatanas, or blow-

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canes; and the poison they make is esteemed the most powerful of any. They are well formed, the women particularly so in their hands and feet, with rather straight noses and small lips. They cut their hair in a line across the forehead and let it hang down their backs. Their cleanliness is remarkable. Very little is really known of them. They attack any person who goes into their territory, and boatmen are careful not to encamp on their side of the Ucayali. Castlenau gives twelve Mayoruna words and Bates has an interesting account of a Mayoruna girl who was captured on the Yavari."

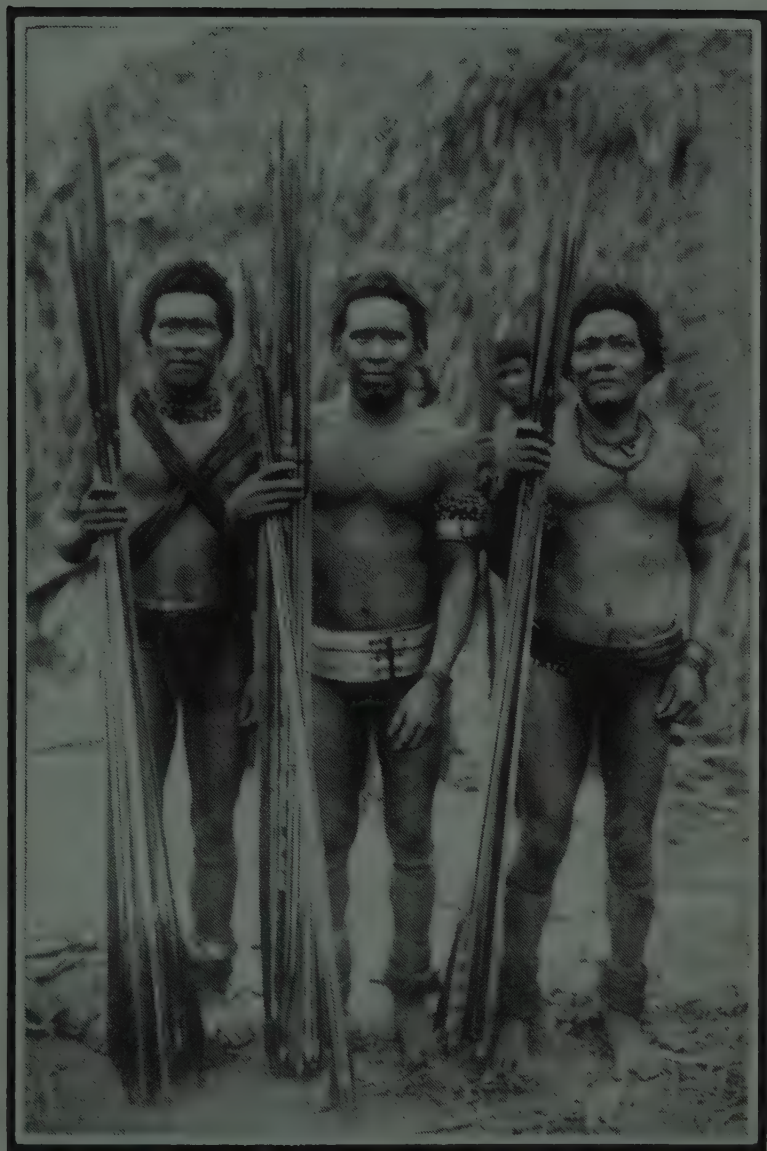
For several centuries these stories of white Indians have been told by explorers and travellers of many nationalities. Now they are being corroborated by officers of the Indian Service who spend their lives in the dim forests. The truth lies somewhere between the conflicting theories. These Indians are not pure white but very fair-skinned, which shows to a greater extent in contrast with their surroundings. A single white tribe hidden somewhere in the great unexplored would not account for these individual cases scattered over several tribes, each a thousand miles apart. An unknown white ancestor, captive or renegade, with a sudden throwback after possibly two or more generations is the most probable reason. What a store of literary material and subconscious impressions lie hidden in the untutored brains of these isolated, wholly savage and naked white Indians.

CHAPTER XI

THE DISCOVERY OF AN UNKNOWN TRIBE

THE great Amazon itself is regarded by those whose vocation takes them into the twilight forests, pestilential swamps or remote damp-hot rivers of this mysterious land of solitude and inconceivable vastness much in the same way as the Hudson and the Thames are regarded by the people of New York and London during a heat wave. There are tiny "seaside" resorts, bathing-boxes, bungalows and launch trips around both Pará and Manáos. Occasionally a jaguar finishes the picnic, an alligator swims alongside the launch, or an electric eel stops bathing, but there is always the coolness of the great river, the breeze of passage, iced drinks, civilized food, a roof, a bed, and human companionship.

It was in this way that Manáos, the little jungle town on the *Ultima Thule* of civilization, appealed to me after the return from the upper reaches of the Mutum and Gy-Paraná rivers. Somehow I longed for a good meal, a bath and a talk. The thought of an iced drink brought tears to my throat; and so I remained in Humaitá just long enough to detest the sight of it, because no river steamer went down-stream for four and a half days. When at last I left the white-washed room, with its ants and spiders, and boarded the river boat I lounged, read, bathed, ate and had many iced drinks, and so the "plans of mice and men——" My desire to rest in Manáos was waning



THE THREE SUB-CHIEFS OF THE ITOGAPUK NATION.

In the background is one of the curious communal *maluccas* of this new tribe

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fast, and when, at Manicoré, I heard of a prominent Amazonian who was sending a party up the Aripuanan river it vanished as suddenly from my thoughts as my now disreputable luggage did from the river steamer. Two days later I sat in a large batalõe with three companions, skirting round Aripuanan Island into the hidden mouth of that wonderful river of the same name, traversed throughout its entire length by the Roosevelt-Rondon Expedition in 1913, and bound for the still unexplored forests away from the main stream in latitude $8^{\circ} 17' S$. Officers of the Indian Service were then scouting for wild tribes thought to inhabit the banks of a small stream called the Madeirinha, and the batalõe, with its *caboclo* crew, was taking them, and one outlying estate, some essential supplies.

What made this quest irresistible was, that among all my maps and data I could find no mention of this river, nor any trace of other European travellers having explored this blank region. Those fine old wilderness travellers, Theodore Roosevelt, and General Rondon of the Brazilian Overland Telegraph Commission, whose explorations are far too little known, had come up this river in 1913, and, apparently, they had passed the mouth of the Madeirinha, but seem to have made no special investigations in that region. The opportunity was one which could not have been missed without lifelong regrets.

About the tedious journey of 225 miles up the Aripuanan, with its dark waters unruffled by the faintest breeze, its uninterrupted walls of Equatorial forest, with rapids partially bridging the gap in the sea of foliage, its mosquitoes perpetually buzzing in the

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steaming, stagnant air, and its almost non-existent population, I shall say but little, because those who are interested will find an admirable description elsewhere. Anything I could add would be a mere grumble at personal discomfort combined with difficult portages past rapids and almost continuous labour poling or paddling against the current. The purport of this book is to describe the wild tribes of the remote Amazons, and any difficulty there may be in changing from one zone to another, with the natural passage of time and distance, must not be allowed to alter the character of the book into one of tedious and uneventful travel. Short mention of both comings and goings is all that space permits, and is necessary solely to prevent the narrative from becoming hopelessly disconnected.

We left Aripuanan Island, in latitude $5^{\circ} 22' S.$, on 30th July and covered the 225 miles in eighteen days. Shortly after the junction of a big river, in latitude $7^{\circ} 32' S.$, there was a succession of dangerous rapids, which necessitated heavy work in unloading the *batalõe* more than once. A few miles farther on there was a seemingly deserted *barraca* with more rapids; and then the small *Madeirinha* joined the main stream in latitude $8^{\circ} 17' S.$

This little stream was of a bottle-green colour and curved through very dense forest of sombre hue. In places the great trees, with their huge umbrella branches, met overhead, and the canoe floated on a mirror-like surface in a dim green half-light. For some hours we searched for the camp of the Indian officer and his assistants, and at last discovered it standing in a small clearing, half hidden by intervening forest. This intrepid officer received me kindly, and explained the

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system he was adopting to get into friendly touch with the savages around, whose war-trails had already been followed for some miles into the particularly dense forest. One of his *caboclo* assistants had been shot at with arrows, but so far no Indians had actually been seen.

That evening I camped by the side of the little temporary post, and enjoyed the first proper night's rest since leaving Manicoré, being relieved of the necessity of keeping watch. For two days nothing of interest occurred, although my hopes were raised by the expressed belief of the Indian officer that a totally unknown tribe were hiding in the forest around. The surprise came sooner than was expected, for on the third day two savages approached the presents hung temptingly on the trees and were surprised by one of the assistants, who, however, effected a safe retreat. This man came into camp and told of Indians with feather head-dresses, gigantic spears, and bands across both shoulders made of wood.

This intelligence caused considerable excitement, because, from the assistant's description, it certainly appeared that we were on the eve of a discovery. This work of Indian-stalking, or, more correctly, attracting, is not only trying to the nerves, but also demands patience. To have followed up this first meeting with an endeavour to find the *maloccas* would have been fatal to success if not also to the lives of the whole party. In the dense forest around two white men and a number of unreliable *caboclos* would make but a poor stand against a savage tribe versed in the art of jungle warfare.

Nothing further was either seen or heard of the Indians for eight days, and the waiting, not knowing

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whether they would attempt a surprise attack, became exceedingly trying. However, on the morning of the ninth day a succession of weird cries from the semi-dark aisles electrified the camp. Thinking they might be intended as calls of friendship, because most Amazonian Indians consider that only an enemy approaches in silence, their cries were answered, but nothing occurred for over half-an-hour, although on both sides the shouting was repeated every few minutes.

At last the leafy walls parted in several places simultaneously, and six bronze-coloured savages, armed with long lances, appeared in a semicircle half round the tiny clearing. It was at once apparent that they belonged to a new tribe or subdivision. None of these six men had either the oblique eyes or Mongolian features of the usual Amazonian savage. Their hair was cut in a thick fringe all round, and was decorated with short lengths of split cane. Around their waists, ankles, wrists, arms and shoulders were cane or reed bands, and from the one round the top of the arm feathers stood up like epaulets. With the exception of these curious adornments, a necklace of seeds, and endless thin rings of black paint round the legs, they were completely naked.

They were asked in the Tupi language to lay down their lances, bows and arrows, but failing to understand, were given an example by the officer calmly laying his rifle on the ground. After some minutes' hesitation they followed the lead given, and then received numerous presents, which caused their somewhat cruel eyes literally to gleam, although there was no dancing, shrieking or manifestations of joy such as I had witnessed among the Parintintins.

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The two most characteristic features were their bloodshot eyes and pierced upper lips, both of which had their explanation in anthropophagous practices, as I afterwards learned. Their arrows were decorated with birds' feathers, and had broad wooden blades which had not been steeped in poison. Other curiosities were cane rings worn on the second finger, and loops of fine cord round the neck and waist but crossed in the centre. Unlike all the other tribes I had so far met, they did not beat their breasts in monkey fashion when pleased, but assumed an easy and dignified air.

After a long conversation carried on in dumb show, with the aid of a few Tupi words, which they seemed to understand, they departed loaded with presents. It struck me then that half of what they received was quite useless to them because they did not understand for what purpose such things as aluminium spoons and forks were intended. However, they would, in all probability, be worked by stone into spear-heads, and, after all, a real beginning had been made, which was by no means as simple as it may seem in print.

For some days the Indians did not put in an appearance, then the cries came once more from the silent depths of the forest, this time in greater volume. From this it was apparent that friendly relations had been established, and that others were coming to receive gifts. Even so, however, great care was necessary to avoid giving cause for either offence or alarm. No one is more susceptible to these than the savage when he first meets the white man. Distrust and suspicion are present in every action and look. Wonder or fear may momentarily take their place, but always the dominant mental impression is one or other of these, and the

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care which has to be exercised to prevent the flaming of sudden passions is not only ludicrous, but needs a student of psychology to appreciate.

Scarcely had the Indians emerged from the dark forest, and almost mysteriously appeared in the clearing, before it became apparent their visit was more formal than hitherto. They stood in a group round three of their number, who were distinguished by more beads, bands and feathers. They were, as I afterwards learned, the triple chiefs of the tribe. It appears that in addition to a chief there is a medicine man and a hunter, all of whom rank equally, have the first choice of wives, and form the council of both war and peace. After great efforts in the way of signs, drawings on a cleared space of hard earth, and a few words of Tupi, it appeared that their tribal name was "Itogapuk," which then conveyed absolutely nothing, although later it became apparent that a new tribe, or family, of the human race had been discovered in these great and mysterious forests.

The *maloccas* of the Itogapuks were situated less than one "sun" farther up the little shallow Madeirinha, which, according to Roosevelt, was accidentally discovered by an Indian *seringuero* in the employ of Senhor Caripé (rubber king of the Aripuanan). The man was lost in the forests of the Gy-Paraná, and after wandering about in the dense jungle for twenty-eight days, living on fruit, palm-tops and nuts, he discovered the Madeirinha.

When this stage in the palaver had been reached with patience and much ingenuity it was deemed expedient to make a distribution of presents. It was remarkable how eagerly the smallest metal article was

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pounced upon by even the youths of this unknown tribe. Head-dresses of aruras feathers, necklaces of seeds and decorated hunting spears were gladly given by the Indians in return for the white men's gifts.

While this slow exchange of presents and confidences was taking place I succeeded in inducing one young brave, who could not have been more than fifteen years of age, to allow me to examine more closely some of his adornments. In addition to the upper lip, the septum of the nose was pierced and a short length of straw put through the hole. The belt round the waist was made of a kind of tree bark, and concealed a fine cord used to prevent injury to a certain part of the body. The bamboo anklets rattled only when dancing, and the bands round the arm were then slipped down and so rattled against those on the wrist. Most queer of all was the wooden ring on the middle finger which, apparently, is worn as a charm to ward off evil. It has since occurred to me that the wooden anklets might also serve to protect the lower portions of the legs from the bites and stings of the larger insects and reptiles, for it must be remembered that what Amazonia lacks in numbers of big game compared with Africa is made up by the variety and ferocity of the smaller animals, reptiles and insects. It is impossible for either white man or native to walk many miles through the forest without getting bitten or stung in several places by ants, *piums*, jiggers, mosquitoes, sandflies, spiders or other insects or reptiles. This young Itogapuk had sores on the upper part of his legs as well as on his back caused by the repulsive Berni fly, which deposits its eggs in the wounds made.

Towards sundown the Indians departed without

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revealing the exact whereabouts of their village. This was a great disappointment to me, because I was faced with the alternative of either leaving in six days' time with the batalõe, which was returning down the Aripuanan, or of remaining on in this isolated region for an unknown period until another supply-boat could come up the 225 miles of dangerous river. This might be months hence, and circumstances would not permit of my being absent for so long if further journeys in this wonderful but amazingly vast region were to be undertaken before returning to Europe.

However, my disappointment was short-lived, for two days later six Indians and a small boy came into camp, after giving the usual warning cries and leaving their weapons on the edge of the clearing. So far they had kept their women-folk in the background, but on this occasion it did not take long to discover that somewhere in the forest close at hand the women were waiting a signal from their men-folk that it was safe to come into the white men's camp. Apparently the Itogapuks, like the Parintintins, could not understand why we had not brought our wives and daughters into the forest with us. When this was satisfactorily explained the Indians departed and were gone for about half-an-hour. Then the tedious cries and return shouts of welcome were repeated, and about a dozen figures filed into the clearing. They had brought their women at last, which meant that confidence was established, and with care we should soon reach the *maloccas* of this hitherto quite unknown tribe.

The Itogapuk girls were decidedly better-looking than the men, and several of them were shades lighter in complexion. They were absolutely naked except

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for a waist-belt of bark and other adornments similar to the men. It seems that the women of this tribe have their upper lips pierced but not their noses, and, unlike the men, remove all hairs from the body. This latter seems to be a universal custom among the women of all Amazonian races. They were very timid and at first kept behind their husbands and fathers. Unlike the Parintintins, they readily accepted presents from the hands of white men.

After many curious glances and much talking among themselves they asked why our skins were white, and if we wore clothes because our country was hotter than the "Emelene," which we assumed to be the native name for the Madeirinha, or Little Madeira—why so named it is difficult to discover. After about half-an-hour in camp they were about to depart with their presents when it was explained that having visited our *maloccas* we should like to visit theirs. This apparently simple statement not only occupied some time to explain, but also created much discussion among the Indians when made clear to them. Eventually they offered to return next day and guide us to their village.

Having discovered the tribal name we sat up late that night, round a camp-fire used to illuminate and cook, discussing whether the Itogapuks formed a separate nation, or were a sub-tribe of one of the great aboriginal groups. Although, in the absence of more definite proof, no decision could be arrived at, there was every probability that this curious tribe, whose area of murky forest lies between the domain of the war-like Parintintins and the equally savage Nambiquaras, really formed a sub-tribe of one or other of these two great Amazonian races. Their language we

The Discovery of an Unknown Tribe

had not then discovered, although certain words in the Tupi dialect, which is similar to Guarani, had seemed to be understood. In stature, colour and hair they resembled the Parintintins, but in their personal adornments were far more like the Nambiquaras. Subsequent investigations strengthened the evidence in favour of the latter, but there are also strong reasons to suppose that they may form a branch of the fierce and wandering Araras tribe, although they are now officially listed by the Indian Department at Manáos as a separate tribe under the name of *Itogapuk*.

CHAPTER XII

THE RIVER OF THE ITOGAPUKS

IT was late in the afternoon of the following day when the Indians again arrived in the clearing. The officer of the post, knowing the treacherous nature of all savage races, considered it unwise to start for the *maloccas* that day. The three guides were offered shelter in camp, but eventually built themselves a fire in the clearing and lay down with their feet towards the blaze. Next morning a start was made before the ague-mists had cleared from the thick forest, with the result that only a strong injection of quinine saved me from an attack of this peculiarly distressing malady which is very prevalent during June and July in this area of forest.

It should be mentioned here that old travellers in Amazonia do not favour the continual use of quinine. They maintain that it causes the dreaded black-water fever. Personally I have spent weeks on the Amazon and its tributaries without taking a single dose, although when suffering from exhaustion, or having been drenched by the heavy rains, I invariably take quinine in sufficient quantity to ward off the consequences of exposure. Apparently it does not act as a preventive of malaria, but is the most handy and successful drug with which to bludgeon the symptoms.

We paddled up-stream in the *batalõe* for about two hours, and it was in the *igarapé* into which we then turned that I saw whole fields of the gigantic

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water-lilies known as the *Victoria Regia*. Their saucer-shaped, whitish green leaves on the black water made a wonderful picture with its setting of *assia* palms and *matto grosso*. As we progressed farther up the igarapé alligators became numerous and were busy hunting for their breakfasts. It was barely eight o'clock and the sun had not yet gained sufficient power to render the forest lifeless. Everything was moist and a vivid exuberant green. The golden light flashed on the ripples and splashes made by the caymans in their clumsy efforts to get away from the batalõe. The macaws and monkeys chattered in the trees.

Notwithstanding this morning freshness, however, there was something unhealthy. Whether it was the rank odour of decaying vegetation, the semi-dark receding aisles, the absence of even a faint breeze, the sense of loneliness, distance and a universe in which man is of no account, cannot be said. This igarapé of the Itogapuks appealed to me, however, as a tropical paradise with the atmosphere of a sepulchre. The word "igarapé" means in Tupi: *igara*=canoe, *pé*=path.

Some fifteen minutes' walk along a jungle path and the light of day again broke through the leafy canopy. It proved to be quite a large clearing, and on one side were ten of the most curiously shaped *maloccas* I had so far seen in the great forests of this land of mystery. They were built of straw, partly plaited, and were beehive in shape, with pointed roofs. Their size, combined with the number of naked figures around, made it quite apparent that each hut contained a number of families, and that the domestic life of the Itogapuks was more or less communal.

There were no signs of hostile intent, although

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there existed a very distinct air of combined timidity and distrust. At first only the old women and children approached. During the exchange of gifts, however, the crowd round the three chiefs slowly increased in numbers. Curiosity overcame their natural shyness and suspicion, but it would have been highly dangerous to have made a false move in the electric atmosphere which prevailed during the first hour. After a meal, brought from camp, in which the whole tribe, numbering nearly a hundred, joined—afterwards consuming large quantities of monkey and an intoxicating drink—the tension slowly lessened.

Two young Itogapuk girls of about fourteen, after circling curiously round me for some time, eventually plucked up courage for a closer examination. First my clothes, then my hands, were scrutinized in perfect silence and wonderment. Not satisfied with this, they rolled up my sleeves, spat on my arms and rubbed them vigorously with their hands! Evidently they expected the white to come off and see me revealed in my true colours. When nothing happened, however, they tried further investigations at the open neck of my shirt, but having been spat upon once I gently but firmly resisted any further scientific tests, distracting their attention by allowing them to listen to the ticking of my watch.

While it was impossible to call these young Itogapuk women good-looking in the European sense of the word, they were, however, by no means ugly for savages. Their eyes were spoilt by being very blood-shot, and their nakedness was increased by the habit of removing all superfluous hairs from the body. Several of them were the nearest approach so far seen

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to the fabled white Indians, although later on I discovered two other specimens, one a child among the Ocainas, and the other a girl of an unknown tribe on the Ecuadorian frontier, whose skins were so white that at a distance they could not be distinguished from Europeans, and even when seen at close quarters were no darker complexioned than Italians.

The hair of the Itogapuk women is bobbed and confined by a band of straw. Round their necks they wear necklaces of brown and white seeds, and, not content with one row, they wear many. Several of them wore bands of coloured straw wound round each shoulder, and also round their waists, arms, wrists and ankles. Babies in arms were carried supported by the hip-bone of the mother. The children had pet monkeys which sat on their shoulders or hands. One woman had heavy earrings of black stone, but it does not appear to be the custom to elongate the lobes of their ears by this means.

As several of the women had the upper lip pierced, this would seem to be a tribal custom irrespective of sex, but as no children or young people were thus disfigured it may be some symbol of marriage, age or rank. Although both men and women live day and night in a state of nudity under the communal roofs, there was no sign of indecency or of the loathsome diseases which are only too apparent in the settlements.

The war-bows were made of dark mahogany-coloured wood and were about seven feet high. To extend them to the full required very considerable strength. There were three kinds of arrows: one had blunt ends and was used for killing birds; another had broad sharp wooden blades for hunting the tapir, onça and wild

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pig; and the war-arrows had hideous-looking barbs soaked in poison and protected by a cane sheath. The only spear in use appeared to be a long lance decorated with birds' plumes near the hilt. Its principal use appears to be the impaling of turtle, fish, alligators, snakes and iguanas (lizards).

The Itogapuks refer to a good and bad spirit, which appear to be merely the recording and avenging angels of a supreme and unseen god who resides at will in either the sun or the moon. They have to be placated with feasts, and by the torture of young girls, to rid them of evil and render them docile and obedient. Children are of small account, although, apparently, well treated. Girls are betrothed at the age of ten to the man who offers the best presents, and thenceforward live by the communal fire of their lord and master. Orphans are given away, and in this manner one little girl and boy from this tribe found their way to Manáos to be educated.

The children were a laughing, happy crowd, who seemed never to tire of playing with their pet monkeys. One or two wore necklaces and amulets of the polished wood of the *tucuna* palm, as well as ropes of brown and white seeds. One boy about twelve years of age was inordinately proud of a head-dress made from the skin of the black *onça*, or jaguar, an animal very rare in this region.

That night we camped on the edge of the *igarapé*, by the side of the Itogapuk village. The frogs in the swamp uttered weird cries throughout the night, which was made even more hideous by the clouds of insects of all kinds. Curiously enough it was during my first night with this savage tribe that I encountered the

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vampire bat. The air was very still and the night intensely hot. Under the mosquito netting it seemed difficult to breathe, and within a few minutes of turning in everything was wet through with perspiration. This, combined with the croaking of hundreds of frogs in the near-by swamp and the buzz of innumerable insects, kept me awake for hours.

Being very tired and restless, I must have kicked the mosquito netting away from my feet while dozing. Anyhow, just before dawn I awoke, and felt a curious cool, tickling sensation in one of my feet. Using the little pocket electric torch which is reserved for emergencies I flashed on the rays suddenly, and a large vampire bat was flapping his webbed wings while sucking the blood from a wound made in my left foot. Blinded by the light, this loathsome creature flew into the mosquito netting and then circled away into the starry dawn.

Rearranging the mosquito netting, I examined the foot and found a small but deep incision on the instep from which blood was dripping. Next morning I felt very weak—whether this was due to loss of blood or sleep, it is impossible to say—and my ankles were so swollen from the bites of mosquitoes that I could not get on my marching boots, and had to content myself with a pair of soft leather mosquito boots which I had hitherto kept specially for ease and comfort during the evenings in camp and canoe.

That day I succeeded in getting into one of the curious *maloccas*. The Itogapuks build their straw-thatch huts with two very low entrances, and it was necessary to bend almost double in order to gain access. The interior was semi-dark, except for the dim rays from the two

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doorways, and, unlike the *maloccas* of the Indians of the Tapajós and Gy-Paraná, no smouldering fires were alight. Beyond a wicker basket of fruit, several gourds, and a wooden bowl for crushing the mandioca, there were no other utensils or furniture. Several bows were leaning against the thatch sides, and a number of arrows were stuck in specially made holes in the mud floor. Two or three skins lay about, denoting the space allotted to each family, for the *malocca* was a large one, measuring about 35 feet in diameter and 15 feet high. It appears that the two doorways give quick access, in the event of attack, to either the clearing or the igarapé.

The canoes, which were hidden amid the vegetation overgrowing the bank, were light but very strong structures of bark held open by struts. They were much superior to the dug-outs of the Caripunas, and somewhat resembled those of the Parintintins. Each was provided with a gourd, sealed up to make it water-tight, fixed inside the canoe to the bent wood which did duty for both a bow and stern post. From this it was evident that the Itogapuks were expert canoemen, and, moreover, were accustomed to making journeys up and down rapids. It seemed very unlikely that they used the Aripuanan, a river more or less known and used by rubber gatherers, whom the savage tribes cordially detest, owing to what they have suffered at their hands and from the ever-ready Winchester carbines universally carried. The source and affluents of the Little Madeira are still unknown, and it may one day be discovered that this river leads into some larger stream, or into one of the tributaries of the Madeira, and so affords through communication with

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the Aripuanan. However this may be, the Itogapuks speak of the "Great White Water," and of the "Lake of the Piranha"—a man-eating fish known to exist on many Amazonian rivers, and feared more than the jacaré, or alligator, because, whereas the latter can be seen, the former rises suddenly from the bottom, lunges out of the water, and with its jaws and razor-like teeth bites off a finger, hand or toe.

It would be misleading to say that this tribe of savages appear to have cannibalistic tendencies. In the absence of definite proof it should be assumed otherwise, because cannibalism, in the fullest sense of the word, has so far not been proved against any tribe of the great Amazon forest. There is, however, little doubt that they are anthropophagous, and the evidence lies in their custom of drinking a cupful of the blood of certain animals killed, in the belief that by so doing they gain the strength, cunning or intelligence of their victim. In this respect they are similar to the Cashibos of the Ucayali and the Uaupés of the Uaupés river, who grind up the bones of enemies killed in battle, mix the powder into a thin paste with the fermented juice of fruit, and drink it to secure the strength or sagacity of the deceased but admired foe. If the conquered one is weak, cowardly, or falls an easy victim, then the head is cut off as a trophy and the trunk thrown into the forest or used as bait for big game. It would seem that the women do not participate in these anthropophagous rites, but of this or of cannibalism being prevalent among these tribes I have no evidence, and am of the opinion that it is a mistaken belief.

On the evening of the second day the Itogapuks

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gave us an impromptu war-dance. Decorated with birds' feathers and anklets they made a barbaric picture in the essentially tropical setting of palm fronds and broad paicova leaves. From that portion of the ceremony illustrating the attack it appears that the seven-foot war-bows are first raised over the head while the thong is being drawn back to the firing position. The bow, with the long thin feathered arrow and poisoned barb, is then lowered until level with the eyes before being discharged. The accuracy of aim, if this tribe is a fair example, has been much exaggerated. At very short range their marksmanship is exceedingly deadly, but when the trajectory has to be taken into consideration it is very poor. The dance is a slow shuffling of feet, swaying of naked bodies, advancing and retreating, weird cries and still more weird music from flutes and hollow gourds. It differed from other similar dances, witnessed both before and after, in the final act, which illustrated the capture by the conquerors of the women and girls of the conquered. Each man chose a girl and, throwing her into the air, ran back to his *malocca* with the screaming captive.

Next morning we left the village of the Itogapuks and threaded our way down the small igarapé to our camp near the Aripuanan, which along its upper reaches is called the "Castanho" by the few *caboclo* rubber gatherers who visit these remote regions.

Twenty days later I was enjoying a good civilized meal at the well-known café in the *Avenida* at Manáos.

It was on this journey, at Manicoré, that I first heard of Major Tito Neves, who had then an estate on the Marmellos river, the most sickly of all the tributaries of the great Madeira. When on a pleasure visit to



AN ITOGAPUK MAIDEN DRESSED FOR A TRIBAL DANCE.
The perforation in the upper lip and the curious cane bands can be clearly seen.

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Manáos, many months later, the story of this man's doings in the depths of the forest had been printed and circulated. For the truth of the statements I cannot personally vouch, but the authority from whom I received the information would appear to be reliable, and, moreover, there are the published accounts in Portuguese. I will give here the story in brief as an illustration of the treatment of the Indians by the unscrupulous, and the curious life of adventure on the Amazon trail.

The River Maicy is divided into two sections: the lower portion, near to its junction with the Madeira, is the domain of the Pirahan Indians, while its upper reaches, and those of the Maicy-Mirimé and Gy-Paraná are dominated by the war-like Parintintins, dealt with in previous chapters. Between these two tribes a blood feud existed up to the advent of the Indian officers in quite recent years. This river was the scene of continual tribal warfare, and in order to pacify it posts of the Indian Service were established at the mouth, and between the areas of dense forest inhabited by the Pirahans and the Parintintins. Later the post described in a previous chapter was established on the Maicy-Mirimé to get into friendly touch with the Parintintins. These three posts are transforming this river from one of bloody conflict to a peaceful region.

Opposite to the post on the Middle Maicy are the isolated villages of the Pirahans. This was the scene of action. According to the story, Major Tito Neves descended upon these villages with armed force, drove the natives out of their *maloccas* and *tapirys*, took possession of their little plantations, and enslaved

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many of them for the exploitation of the surrounding Brazil-nut forests.

Having reaped the harvest, Neves burnt the villages with the idea of keeping the Indians from returning, and himself retired with the spoils to Manicoré. Later he built a *barraca* on the site of the destroyed village, but an immense tree fell across the building and destroyed it. So superstitious are the *caboclos*, or half-breeds, that nearly all his workmen left the region, thinking that it was the intervention of Providence.

This queer little story, which is called *The Shadow of Neves*, is nothing in itself, but requires small imagination to fill in with many gruesome details. However, there are always two sides to a question, and together with this episode comes one from Porto Velho of an Indian raid on an estate, murder, fire and destruction, with no Government action to inflict retribution on the offending tribe. They just serve to illustrate types and conditions in the murky forests and on the sickly rivers of this frontier of barbarism.

CHAPTER XIII

A MYSTERIOUS ROCK TEMPLE

IT will be apparent that Manáos is the Clapham Junction of the Middle Amazon river system. On the lower reaches Pará is the city to which all fluvial highroads lead, and not until the Peruvian sections of this great river are entered is the *point d'appui* changed from Manáos to Iquitos, and by this time the Amazon has altered its name, first to the Solimões, and then, when it crosses the Brazilian-Peruvian frontier, to the Marañon. Iquitos is, however, over 1000 miles from Manáos, and does not enter this story yet awhile. We are in the land of vast distances, and every change of region can be intelligibly followed only with the aid of the maps.

After a short rest in Manáos I decided to make one more journey into the heart of the Brazilian wilderness, this time going north to the little-known territory on the frontier of Venezuela, before returning home to Europe for a long rest. My decision to take this route, up the Rio Negro and Branco, was due to a variety of alluring prospects. First came the promise of assistance when I reached the National Fazenda of *S. Marcos* on the little-known Rio Uraricoera; secondly, I was sick of the twilight forest and desired to see the vast unknown plains which were supposed to exist north of the third parallel. Here would be Indians of a totally different type to those of the dense jungles, the recently discovered Rock of Inscriptions, the Crystal

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Mountains, and the unexplored prairies of the Amazon.

The river steamer upon which I embarked on 12th September was very small and of shallow draught. Her speed was so slow going up-stream that hours passed on the open, sunlit and blue-black Negro without apparently making much progress. Manáos, with its Eastern aspect of white houses and towers, dominated by the green and gold dome of its useless theatre, amid the bright tropical foliage and the red sandstone cliffs, glittered in the light of the westering sun, sinking in waves of fire over the unknown forests of Brazilian Guiana. Slowly we stemmed the swift current past S. Raymundo, a pretty little suburb of Manáos famous for its native washerwomen, the wireless station, then the igarapé which leads, through submerged forests, to the falls of Tarumá, and so out into the night-enshrouded wilderness on the starlit river.

Nowhere in Amazonia are the countless points of light in the indigo vault above so perfectly reflected on the placid surface of the river as away out on the black waters of the Rio Negro. At times the effect is curious in the extreme. On a very still night with no moon there are stars above, below and all around. While the lights of the little steamer shine on the water the effect is lessened, but when the hour is late and these are obscured the impression is one of floating idly in a starry space.

On these river steamers meals are served under an awning on the aft deck, and, if the food was at all appetizing, journeys performed in this way, on the more frequented Amazonian rivers, to and from the limit

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of steam navigation, would often prove quite pleasant and wonderfully interesting. The bill of fare, which is seldom varied, consists of eggs cooked in cotton-seed oil, black coffee and farina, a chaff-like substance made from the mandioca, canned beef, guava jelly, and dried fresh-water fish. This kind of food for days or weeks, as the case may be, in the great day and night heat of the rivers and forests, robs these otherwise wonderful scenic journeys of all charm. They become problems of endurance, good training for the infinitely greater hardships which have to be faced when the *mutum-mutum*, as the half-civilized Indians call the steamboat, is left hundreds of miles behind, and all round is the wilderness which takes its toll of effort, endurance and strain, notwithstanding the most careful forethought and organization.

The scenery of the Rio Negro is entirely different from that of most Amazonian rivers, its course being through a hilly district on the east bank, with many flooded forests to the westward. These hills rise up from red sandstone cliffs which jut out into the broad river, and are clothed in the varied greens of tropical vegetation. Away to the south and west views are obtained over leagues of wild, unexplored jungle, the home of unknown tribes whose hunting grounds and *maloccas* are mostly far away in the dark billows of forest just below the misty blue-grey horizon. On this bank there are many long igarapés, and in the far distance can be seen the patches of silver sheen which denote unnamed forest lakes. It is one of the few rivers, in this huge region of 2,000,000 square miles, where broad vistas of the Equatorial forest can be seen by climbing up the hills on one bank.

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Calls are made at collections of *caboclo* huts and mud-brick houses called Tauapersassu, Ayrao and, finally, at the sad and sorry little township of Moura, situated 171 miles from Manáos. Almost opposite this dilapidated settlement the white waters of the Branco join, in streaks and patches, the black flood of the Negro, which is navigable for another 252 miles to a place called Santa Isabel, beyond which there are numerous rapids and many dangerous rocks. During low river season, from December to March, boats of only very shallow draught can even reach S. Isabel.

At Moura the river steamer is exchanged either for the official launch *Amazonia*, or else a *batalõe* must be secured for the long journey up the Rio Branco. As the current is strong there is considerable difficulty in getting up-stream against it. Progress is slow, and the lower part of the river is much encumbered with forest-clad islands, winding *furos* and blind lakes. On both sides stretches the Equatorial forest, and great trees spread their ponderous branches out over the river. Even with the aid of map and compass it is difficult to keep in the main stream, hours being lost wandering round winding waterways which eventually debouch into the main river just a few miles beyond where they left it.

The estuary, a few miles above Moura, is a magnificent sheet of water covered with forest-clad islets. For 220 miles beyond the river is bordered by the ever-green forest wall, through which little is visible, except on the right bank, about 160 miles up-stream, where the Serras do Barauana rise, covered with dense growth, and break the monotony of the landscape. Then comes the little settlement of Vista Alegre,

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where the road which is slowly being built through the forest from Manáos will eventually join the Rio Branco. This road, although commenced many years ago, has so far only reached Campos Salles, some twenty miles out from Manáos.

On the north bank at this point there were two large trees overhanging the river which had been completely taken over by orioles. Their curious hanging nests were suspended from almost every branch. The entrance to the homes of these queer birds is at the bottom, where a passage leads upwards into the nest where the female lays her eggs. The orioles are bright little creatures, chattering and whistling all day long. Near by was a tree containing no less than three large wasps' nests, which somewhat resemble hanging bee-hives.

About twenty miles beyond Vista Alegre the river is broken by the dangerous *Cachoeira Bemqueror*, round which, however, there is a passage by the *Furo do Cuyubim*, as well as a path for portaging over the Serra Caracarahy. When this difficult section has been negotiated the way lies clear to Boa Vista, about sixty miles above the rapids, and the forest thins out until vast rolling plains can be seen in the far distance. The sensation of coming out of the damp twilight of the Equatorial forest into the little palm jungles, with horizon-wide expanses of broken prairie visible from the high banks, can only be likened to emerging from a dimly lighted hot-house into a green field.

I breathed in the air of the Amazon prairies, which tasted like a sea breeze after a London fog. Although there were clumps of trees, and even small jungles, which did not disappear until the *Ultima Thule* of

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Amazonia was reached, high up on the Rivers Parimé and Surumú, the steamy forests, sickly rivers, and malaria-breeding mosquito swamps had been left behind, and at last my eyes were free to wander beyond the prison-like walls of green.

The little settlement of Boa Vista, which is distant from Manáos about 450 miles, consists of some 130 buildings formed into a street, without either paving or light. It is a backwoods settlement, and most of the houses are built of adobe and *taipa*, with zinc or thatched roofs. At this little place I stayed only long enough to tranship my baggage into a waiting launch which was to take me to S. Marcos, and up the Uraricoera river to its junction with the Parimé in latitude $3^{\circ} 20' N$.

At the National Fazenda of S. Marcos, which is under the jurisdiction of the Indian Service, I was met by several officials. Stores were replenished and we turned westwards into the Uraricoera. Along the banks of this narrow stream are numerous estates, mostly concerned with cattle-breeding on the wide open prairies around. In addition to the vast Government estates, where Macuxy Indians provide the necessary cowboys, there are the fazendas of Colonel Bento Brazil and Commendadore Araujo on the Parimé river. To this region I was proceeding in order to explore the mysterious Rock of Inscriptions. Afterwards I intended to cut across the open *campos* to the Alto Surumú.

About the voyage up the Uraricoera and Parimé very little need be said in order to show how the days were spent. The former river is bordered on both sides by small clumps of palms and other trees, between which are broad vistas of rolling prairie and distant

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unnamed serras. The Parimé is a swift-running little stream, having its source in a range of lofty unexplored hills away on the horizon. This stream was not then navigable for launches, and so this mode of conveyance was exchanged for horses, kindly provided, together with villainous-looking Indian vaqueros to act as guides, by the officials of the neighbouring fazenda.

The little-known Rock, which I had come so far to see, stands some way back from the Alto Parimé, and rises from the level prairie like a huge balloon. Its position is sufficiently remote to warrant the assumption that it was the sacred Rock Temple of the great Indian tribes whose hunting grounds surrounded it six hundred years ago.

It is difficult to repress a feeling of awe as one rides out of the open prairie into the shadow of this enormous stone. Similar in many respects to the weird Matoppos of Rhodesia, but far larger, it gives the impression of Almighty Power, for how otherwise could this huge conglomerate and rounded mass of rock have arisen from the level plains which stretch for unknown leagues around.

A narrow ledge of rock leads, spiral fashion, round the base of the overhanging buttress, and on one side there is a cave capable of sheltering a squadron of cavalry. This dark cavern was evidently the temple of the ancient Indian gods, and on its altars of stone many bloody sacrifices have undoubtedly taken place. High up on the outer surface is a narrow platform, evidently artificial, but from which there is now no visible means of descent. Over a hundred feet below this curious little platform is a naturally raised and level terrace of stone. It would seem probable that this

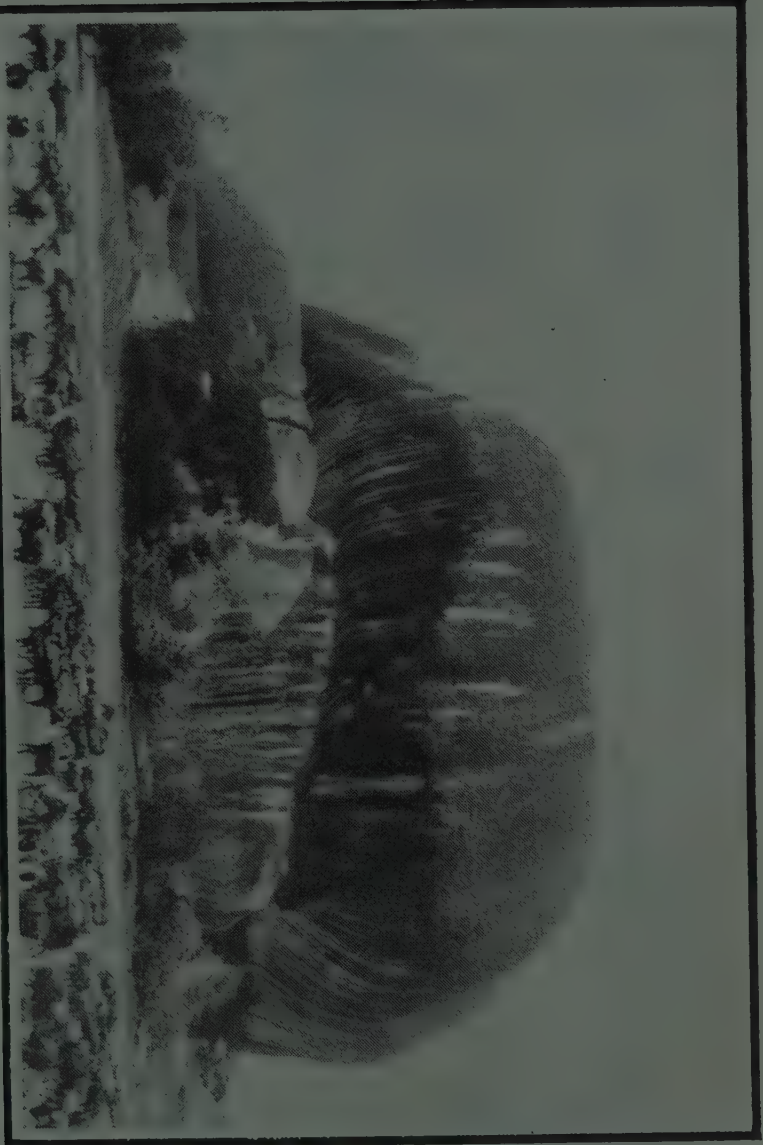
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lofty altar was, in some unknown way, used to hurl the human sacrifices on to the stone terrace in full view of the tribes assembled below.

The sides of this, which must surely be the world's largest stone, are scored and discoloured by the centuries of tropical sun and rain, but beyond the inscriptions, cut deep into the rock, and a copy of which I give here, little is definitely known of its history or purpose. That it was a great temple there can be no doubt, and this is substantiated by the Macuxy, Uapircanas and Jaricunas Indians, the most powerful tribes who now inhabit the territory around.

That night I camped in the shadow of this great Rock Temple, and throughout the hours of darkness the sky was ablaze with the soundless tropical lightning. Beyond the occasional distant beat of hoofs, made by the stampeding cattle far out on the prairie, not even the rustle of wind in the grass broke the unearthly stillness. Every blue flash which zigzagged to earth along the unexplored horizon silhouetted this enormous black mass of stone. It was difficult to prevent the imagination from peopling the night-enshrouded levels around with naked figures performing in weird and ghastly ceremonies. I could not sleep, notwithstanding the exhausting and very uncomfortable ride in the great heat of the day. When the pale crimson streaks of the new dawn flooded the horizon-wide expanse of broken plains I was glad to eat, pack and ride away from the sinister rock, which, when the rosy light tinted its peculiar discolorations, appeared to be dripping with blood.

The Amazonian ennui had me firmly in its grip. Every movement seemed an effort made only by



THE MYSTERIOUS ROCK OF INSCRIPTIONS ON THE ALTO PARIMÉ.

The inscriptions on this huge boulder are believed to date from about 600 B.C. The cave on the right-hand side is capable of sheltering 50 horsemen.

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exerting the last ounce of will-power. The ground under the horses' feet seemed to fade away as I dozed and then came-to with a vicious jerk. Brain and muscles seemed atrophied, yet of actual pain there was none. This extreme tiredness of life produced only a feeling of nausea and a slight headache. Travellers who emerge from the Equatorial forests after inhaling for months the rank enervating air, and sweating almost continuously, must expect this curious reaction. It matters not whether the exit is made by way of the river and the sea, the lofty Andean passes, or the open prairies of the Rio Branco, the result is nearly always the same—several days of uncontrollable heaviness and ennui, which matter little when it is possible to lounge in a deck-chair, but are inclined to become a positive hardship when the burning hours of midday have to be spent in the saddle amid an ocean-wide expanse of stony, wave-like prairie.

When the sun disappeared in a fiery glow behind the gaunt hills I hastened the march of my little cavalcade, consisting of three men and five horses, two of which were merely pack animals carrying the tent equipment. Although less than sixty miles distant, it soon became evident that, having a small but difficult river to ford, we could not reach the desired point on the Surumú that night, and again we camped on the open *campos*, with the lightning flashing all night. On the following day, however, we arrived at the post of the Indian Service on the Surumú and Cotinga rivers.

This little station, far out in the wilds, is peopled by Macuxy, Jaricuna and Uapircana Indians in the process of civilization. They are an uninteresting but quite docile crowd. Making excellent horsemen, they

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are employed by the Federal Government as cowboys to tend the herds of cattle on the open ranges of this great lone land. Attached to the post is a school for the Indian children; these queer little creatures, who, for the first time in history, are now feeling the restrictions of clothes and lesson hours.

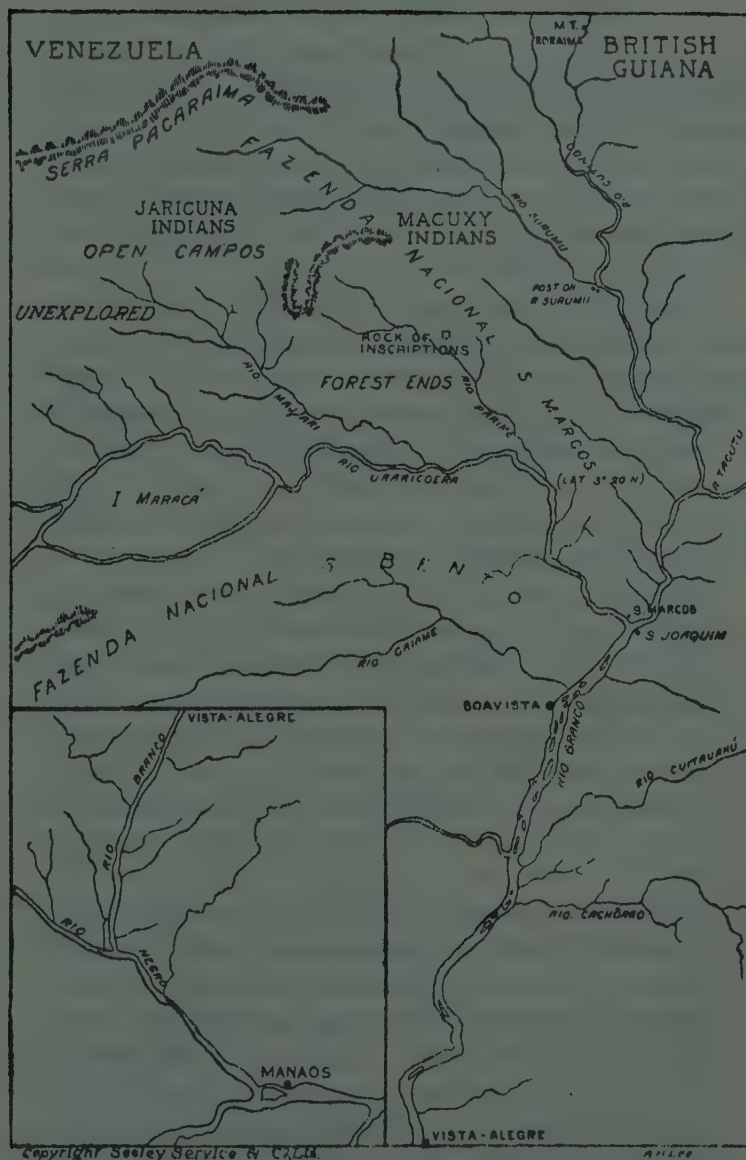
Beyond this last outpost of semi-civilization lie the unknown ranges of the Serra Pacaraima, on the frontier of Venezuela. This low range of undulating hills, which seldom attain a height of more than 1500 feet, is practically covered with scrub, but in all directions there are thousands of square miles of *campos*. It is a vast unpeopled land of boundless possibilities. The few wild Indians who inhabit it are seldom seen, except when the range has been crossed and the forests on the Venezuelan side are entered. Here the fierce Punabi and Howling Monkey Indians still guard the approaches to the unexplored source of the great Orinoco, and, farther north still, other equally war-like tribes surround the sacred mountain *Sipapo*.

Among the frontiersmen and smugglers one hears much of gold, diamonds and precious stones found in the Surumú, Cotinga, Majery and other rivers of this wild land. There is a little range in latitude 4° 15' N., on the Cotinga river, which is called, locally, the "Serra dos Crystaes." It was described to me as "a repository of white, blue and red crystal." Diamonds have been found on the banks of the Cauamé, but this and many other rivers are really quite unexplored, and would seem to present a wonderful field for scientific investigation, with far less risk to the life and health of the investigators than is inseparable from exploration in the great forests to the southward.

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It was while passing the mouth of the Uraricoera on my return to the Rio Branco that I spent one night in the camp of Raol Rabeque, the famous "R.R." of French exploration. He had finished his investigations on the Uaupés river, and had come up to the Rio Branco before going back to his beloved Jura Mountains. He had been extremely ill with malaria, contracted when 280 miles from the last outpost of civilization on the upper reaches of the mysterious and little-known Uaupés. While the Amazon itself is quite healthy and there is nothing to fear in such towns as Pará and Manáos, the more distant rivers and swamps, especially when the waters are receding from the flooded forests, are exceedingly malarious. This comparatively young explorer had remained too long in the fever districts, and, although bright and vivacious, bore the unmistakable signs of having accomplished his last but one great journey into the unknown. He died at sea after a visit to Rio de Janeiro about six months later.

Rabeque gave me some interesting particulars of the Uaupés Indians with whom he had come into close contact during his eight months in the forests. The savages of this remote and rapid-broken stream, which is a tributary of the Upper Rio Negro, are often very tall, and have light copper-coloured skins and black hair, which they wear cut short in the front but twisted into a long tail down their back. Their huts are the largest communal dwellings in the world, some of them being 160 feet long, 80 feet broad and 40 feet high. The roofs are supported by smooth, round tree trunks, and their curious worship of Juripari is carried on in one of these huge *maloccas*. As many as forty families



11. SKETCH MAP OF THE RIO BRANCO PRAIRIES

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live in one hut, each with their own fire and utensils, but subject to the orders of one sub-tribal chief. They sleep in net and feather hammocks, and cultivate small plantations of mandioca, yams and tobacco. Their canoes are made of a simple, hollowed log, frequently thirty feet in length, and almost unmanageable in swift-running water.

Although the men sometimes wear a kind of apron, the women, who are by no means ugly, go about completely naked. Round the neck of all Uaupé braves is a chain of black beads carrying a cylindrical white stone which varies in size according to the local standing of the wearer. The house-chief is called *Tushana*, and his office is hereditary so long as his sons can equal the best hunter of the tribe.

The Uaupé nation, or *Uaupécare*, as it is called, is divided into twenty-one sub-tribes speaking fifteen different dialects. Each of these has been given a name in keeping with the principal characteristic or custom. There are thus Tapuras (tapirs), Tucunderas (ants), Banhunatas and Cubeus (cannibals), Tucanos (toucans), Piriacurus (fish), Pesas (net), and other branches, all inhabiting the malarious valley of this long, winding river.

There is a custom that forbids intermarriage among themselves. When a bride cannot be obtained in battle against a neighbouring tribe then the would-be bridegroom must seek a mate from certain branches of the Uaupé nation which are known as intermarrying tribes. These live at peace, and are agricultural, while the war-like tribes live by plundering each other and neighbouring Indian races.

Both river and Indians have, apparently, obtained

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their name from a small bird called "uaupé," or "shining face," because of a bright-coloured head. When a Uaupé dies the body is exposed to the birds of prey until the skeleton is picked clean. The bones are then powdered and mixed with an intoxicating drink which is imbibed by all the relatives, the idea underlying this repugnant custom being "that it is better to be inside a friend than an insect or reptile."

Their arms consist of lances, blow-pipes, bows, poisoned javelins, darts, arrows and clubs. In some respects they appear to resemble the Ocainas, whom I met later on the Putumayo, because, according to Rabeque, they also wipe themselves all over with certain leaves two or three times a day.

Perhaps the most interesting and unique custom of the Uaupés is the worship of Juripari, which has no counterpart in the few religions and mythologies of other Amazonian tribes. They have witch doctors, or *payes*, but do not believe in a single god, or unseen creator. All are subservient to these *payes*, and even the children are closely watched, and taught a kind of catechism which is merely a recital of facts concerning the observed workings of nature.

The crude rites centre round a species of devil-god called Juripari, and the whole religion is based upon occultism. About six times a year a festival of Juripari is held in one of the huge *maloccas*. Enormous quantities of intoxicating liquor are made from various fermented fruits into which powdered human bones are introduced. The *payes* assume their grotesquely painted masks, and proceed in a kind of procession through the forest, playing bamboo flutes and making weird noises and movements. All the unmarried women

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of the tribe upon hearing the "Juripari" music flee into the forest and there await the signal to approach. In the meantime the young men are assembled and a certain operation is performed upon them which it is not considered proper that the brides should behold.

When this has been done the older men and women proceed into the forest and collect the unmarried girls who have been waiting. These are often of other tribes and are captives. They are then led into the *malocca*, and, after being inspected by the *pays*, are allotted to their respective husbands upon a kind of occult principle. The bridegroom details exactly the type of girl he desires to marry and what her physical charms should be, before seeing the captives, much in the same way as Europeans express a liking for tall, short, fair or dark women, the difference being that minute details are required by the *pays* before making the allotment. If there is no girl captive who exactly fulfils requirements the particular bridegroom must await the next festival, or search himself among the intermarrying tribes and bring back his captive for another ceremony. Children are born almost without pain or inconvenience to the mother because of certain operations performed from early childhood upon the women of the tribe. Any unmarried woman who beholds the sacred ceremony of Juripari, performed before the mask of the devil-god, with which these festivals open, is doomed to a cruel death by poison.

It was related some years ago in the *London Times* that two missionaries, who thought that some of the unnameable horrors of Juripari could be diminished by exposing the sacred symbols and knives of the cult before an assembled tribe, succeeded by stratagem in



A GROUP OF ITOGAPUK WARRIORS.

A little child can be seen peeping between the legs of the third man from the left.

A Mysterious Rock Temple

holding aloft the objects of tribal veneration. The women fled in panic, and after a consultation between the *payes* it was decreed that, in order to placate the wrathful gods, one out of every ten of the unmarried women who beheld the sacred symbols should be poisoned. This terrible order was immediately carried into effect, and the bodies were sealed up in huge earthenware pots and buried under the mask of Juripari. There are, of course, several symbols of this queer cult, but so few white men have witnessed even a part of the ceremony that very little is known about it. The ritual of Juripari is still, in large measure, one of the unsolved mysteries of the great forests.

CHAPTER XIV

UP THE CHIMBIRI-YACU

THE climate of the lower reaches of the Rio Branco is very damp and unhealthy. While passing through this dense forest belt on the way back to Manáos from the broad, open plains of the frontier I sweated, ached and shivered by turns. Although this sharp attack of malaria passed away before Manáos was reached, the sight of a fine Booth liner alongside the floating quay, a thousand miles from civilization, gave the necessary stimulus, and I returned amid luxury to England.

It was twelve months later when I again approached the Amazon region, this time passing by the friendly little jungle town of Manáos on my way, for a further thousand miles up this great sea-river, to Iquitos, in north-eastern Peru. About the Solimões, as the Amazon is called between its junction with the Rio Negro and the Peruvian frontier, very little need be said, except that the banks are no longer low-lying and often half-submerged by the great floods. Red earth occasionally peeps from beneath its load of gorgeous tropical growth; huge rafts of Amazonian timber, with tiny palm-thatch native huts erected on them, may be seen passing down-stream with the current. Palm islands, which have temporarily lost their hold on the earthy banks, float majestically by with all their green top-sails aglint in the sunlight. Still the parallel lines of the great Equatorial forest continue on their 3000 mile

Up the Chimbiri-Yacu

journey across the continent. So great is the struggle for life in their dim aisles that only those which grow tall can hope for a ray of sunlight; some, unable to reach the life-giving rays, wither, die and are eaten by ants; many are caught in the fatal embrace of the lianas, and after supporting these hanging ropes for ages succumb to their strangle-hold.

A few grow up, like the *assai*, beautiful, feathery but weak for want of light and air; their fronds droop in the twilight before reaching the dim green roof. Many are parasitic, like the orchid, and live on the more virile members of the silent hosts of the forests. There is borne in upon the traveller a feeling that all this riot of beauty should be reproduced on canvas for the world to see, but a Bates or a Wallace, with 7000 specimens in mind, would need the art of a Landseer or a Salvator Rosa to portray the ages-old Armageddon of the flora of Amazonia.

About the beasts, birds, reptiles and insects a similar story could be told. The big, which are few, live on the small, which are many. Only the insects maintain their numerical force as the decades pass by. The fighting species, like the onça and alligator, retreat up the side rivers before the steamboat and the first flush of the coming dawn. The weaker and slower, like the sea-cow and the turtle, are slaughtered to provide strength for the advance guards of the human army who would, if exuberant nature permitted, destroy the wilderness they love.

To think philosophically of these things as one floats for days up the broad Solimões is a sure way of destroying the beautiful views over river, forest and gorgeous sky. The heat, the silence, the vague

Up the Chimbiri-Yacu

realization of aloofness from the world of living men, are all enemies of rational thought. The great Equatorial forests, like the sand-rimmed deserts and the Arctic snow-levels, are silent places in which man is conscious of his intrusion and insignificance. Here it is best to think and see only on the surface; the deeper levels lead to madness. Wandering through the semi-dark aisles, waist-deep amid the swampy undergrowth along the 100,000 miles of river bank, many good men have died, or been rescued, talking aloud, starving and insane. One such was found, hundreds of miles from civilization, by the Roosevelt-Rondon Expedition; another died in the Candelaria Hospital; a third left a last incoherent message on a tree by the Rio Branco, and these are but a few from memory's list. There is horror in the snake-infested swamps, loathsome insects, repulsive forms of death and disease, incomprehensible doctrines, curious atmospheric storms, weird light, oppressive heat and stillness, poison-loving natives, and sickening odours of rich decay. Yet life is all around. Here is Coary, a small *caboclo* town lit by kerosene flares; Tabatinga, the frontier post with its dusky garrison, the broad sunlit river and moist green vegetation. So why ponder on the unseen things of a region still veiled in the deepest mystery?

In the neighbourhood of Tabatinga, on the frontier between Brazil and Peru, live the remnants of the once powerful Tacuna Indian tribes. Even a few miles away from the settlement they still roam the forests naked, and tattooed round the mouth to resemble the monkey. The women and even the older children also have painted lines from the corners of the mouth to the ears. If it were not for this hideous war-paint the Tacunas

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might be classed among the best-looking and well-formed Indians of the Amazon. As it is, however, their appearance is grotesque in the extreme. They believe in a good spirit which they call *Nanuloa*, and an evil one called *Locazy*. After death the spirit is supposed to reside in the house of the former, while the corpse is bent double until the two extremities meet and is then sealed up in a huge earthenware pot and buried. These pots with their skeletons can be purchased, after being dug up, in some of the little settlements along the river banks. The Tacunas wear necklets of jaguars' and monkeys' teeth, decorate their heads and arms with feathers, and prepare the most deadly poisons known in Amazonia.

At Pebas the small river steamer enters a creek on the north bank, and comes to rest near a motley collection of mud hovels, thatched huts and a few stucco *barracas*. There is a small stream here which runs inland towards the Putumayo, the isle-dotted entry of which was passed some miles back while the moon was casting its gentle light on this river of past atrocities. Down this stream come Yahuas Indians to barter their queer wares with a merchant of Pebas.

These Indians are still wild but comparatively harmless. They dress in capes and skirts of grass, and are the descendants of those who, centuries ago, impressed Orellana, while on his famous voyage of discovery down the Napo, with the belief that he was being attacked by a fierce tribe of women warriors—the Amazons. From a photograph of several male members, taken at Pebas, their likeness to women is strikingly apparent.

The Yahuas, who are also known by several other

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names, belong to a sub-tribe of the Orejones. They paint their bodies with the red dye of the *achiote*, and inhabit the Yahuas river, which is a small tributary of the Putumayo. It was from this stream that the tribe obtained its local name. There is a mission station near Pebas which is doing good work among this and neighbouring half-savage tribes. The remainder of this Indian nation inhabit the banks of the Alto Putumayo and Napo.

The last hundred miles of river before Iquitos is broken by islands, and the estuary of the Napo, down which Orellana sailed when he discovered the Amazon in 1539. On both banks of this portion of the main stream only a very short journey up one or other of the rivers or igarapés leads the traveller into the domain of semi-savage tribes.

Situated about 2200 miles from the Atlantic seaboard the small settlement of Iquitos is at present a sorry affair, due more to the apathy of the Government than of the inhabitants. It stands on a bank of the Marañon which is not only being continually undermined by the current, but also contains the evidence that at some remote period in the past the Amazon formed a portion of an inland sea. There is a strata of shells, generally considered to be those of sea fish.

The streets of Iquitos are piquant. Low one-storeyed houses, built with projecting roofs to shade the windows from the fierce rays of the sun, are intermingled with three-storeyed brick and stucco buildings of more modern architecture. The drainage of the town is very bad. Open sewers traverse the centre of the roads, which, during the wet season, are impassable with mud and stagnant pools of water.

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Notwithstanding these deplorable hygienic conditions the little township is illuminated by electricity! Realizing the almost insuperable difficulties of connecting themselves with civilization—about 1200 miles distant, on the Pacific coast—the energetic inhabitants, who have only recently been quelled after months of revolt, are glowing with enthusiasm at the possibility of an aerial transport service across the Andes.

After a stay of seven days in Iquitos I discovered a launch, belonging to Señor Ramon, which was proceeding to an outlying concession, fifteen miles up the Chimbiri-Yacu river, near the tiny native settlement of Vaca Marina. After obtaining the promise of a tow from Señor Ramon—who, with true Peruvian courtesy, would accept nothing by way of recompense—I purchased a respectable canoe for an equally respectable sum, bought stores—very difficult to obtain even at famine prices—and hired two young and quite docile-looking Cocama Indians.

The slow struggle up-stream against the current would have been exceedingly monotonous but for the interesting information regarding the wild Indian tribes around, kindly given me by Señor Ramon, who, several years before, had been exploring for rubber concessions on the Lower Pastaza river. He told me that all the tribes between the west bank of the Tigré and the east bank of the Upper Santiago were of the cannibalistic Huambisa nation, although, in the few instances where their existence was definitely known, they were called by various sub-tribal names. Those in the dense forests away from the river bank were very fierce and treacherous.

It was my intention upon arriving at the end of the

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launch journey to proceed up-stream by canoe as far as possible in order to get into touch with the tribes of this region, who were known to be head-hunters, and to possess the secret of reducing human heads to the size of an orange without destroying the features. I realized the great difficulty of this quest, and from its inception doubted a successful issue. However, nothing can be gained without an effort, and the tribes of the Huambisa nation are so little known that much of scientific value might be learned by even a half-success. When reasoning in this way, however, it should be remembered that I did not know the vicious nature of the tribes concerned nor the direction of their villages.

Señor Ramon owned an alligator farm on the Lower Chimbiri-Yacu which was entirely run by a half-caste and some semi-civilized Cocamas. The *modus operandi* was to allow these huge reptiles to go up-stream during flood season and then to trap them when they followed the receding waters back towards the broad Marañon. Few more exciting occupations can be imagined than trapping wild alligators. For many months nothing need be done, then when the waters show signs of receding huge traps made of immense tree trunks have to be hauled by rope and tackle across the river at an acute angle.

This causes the reptiles to congregate in a small pond made in the river bank. Once inside this artificial enclosure there is no way of escape and those Silurians who have reached maturity, being possibly one or two hundred years old, are slaughtered for their skins, which, however, being tanned badly, and consequently somewhat stiff, cannot compete with those produced

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by the alligator farms along the coast of the Caribbean. Señor Ramon offered to sell me 5000 skins a year at twenty-five shillings apiece. If the tanning were better done and the skins rendered soft and pliable, alligator farming on the remote Amazons would be a most profitable undertaking while the vogue for ladies' shoes, hand-bags and other articles made of this kind of leather lasted.

After saying good-bye to Señor Ramon and the alligator farm, difficulties came one on top of the other. The Chimbiri-Yacu looks a mild and easy stream, but it possesses a strong current, is much obstructed and very shallow, which rendered the work of poling upstream in the terrible heat not only exhausting in the extreme, but so slow that in three days we had progressed only twenty-two miles from the point where we left the launch. The forest was very thick with some faint blue hills on our right hand.

That evening it was discovered we had taken the wrong turning near the mouth of a small stream called on Peruvian maps "Urama," which is the last point, or river, to have received a name. Beyond lies *terra incognita*. This important discovery was first brought to my notice by the slackening of the head current. It was quite evident from this that we had not only left the main stream, but also any other river coming from higher ground.

The river suddenly broadened and it became apparent that we had made our way into a large but very shallow lake. Finding no mention of it on any existing map, I have named this big sheet of water, which was at least fifteen miles long by five broad, "The Lake of the Cow-fish" on the accompanying

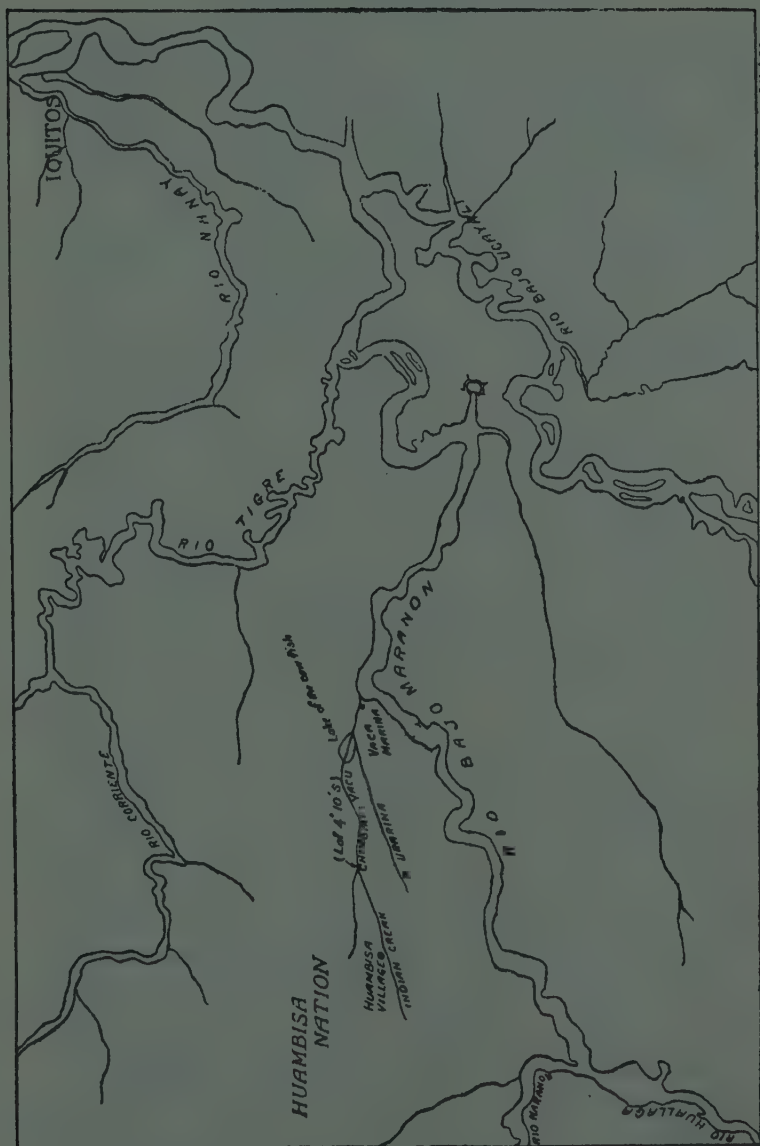
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sketch-map. It was here that I first saw that strange fresh-water mammal known as the manaté, or cow-fish. These creatures exist on many Amazonian backwaters, but are very seldom seen by travellers who do not know their favourite haunts. The cow-fish is called "Peixa boi" by the Brazilians (Portuguese) and "Vaca Marina" (Spanish) by the Peruvians. Almost every tribe of Indians has its own name for this useful fish which furnishes them with oil.

Being of a bluish grey colour, it is often extremely difficult to distinguish the smooth back of a cow-fish from the brackish water or a floating log. When the animal turns over, however, it is more easy to discover because of the pink markings on the belly, which give it the appearance of a rubber ball. The usual length of a full-grown animal is about 6 feet, and its snout, from which it obtained its "christian name," is like that of a cow.

The senses of sight, smell and hearing are so well developed that the natives declare there is no animal which requires greater skill to capture. It is killed either by the harpoon or by strong nets placed across the entrance to its feeding grounds. The flesh of the cow-fish is considered to be quite good, having a similar taste to pork. Personally, however, I cordially dislike the flavour. This remarkable animal has flippers, is covered, under the skin, by a thick layer of fat, and yields, when killed, several gallons of oil, which is used by the Indians for massage in various weakening diseases and appears to produce wonderful results.

After wasting a day and night exploring this large forest lake we regained the main stream of the Chimbiri-Yacu and fought our way up-stream for two days.



III. SKETCH-MAP OF THE CHIMBIRI-YACU REGION

Up the Chimbiri-Yacu

Beyond a deserted palm-thatch hut nothing was visible except the jungle and some distant hills. Realizing the impossibility of reaching the head-waters of the river, which was becoming extremely shallow, within a reasonable space of time at the speed we were travelling, and thoroughly exhausted by the ten days' effort in the Turkish-bath-like atmosphere, combined with frequent soakings in the tropical storms, I decided to turn into the slower-moving water of a stream which leaves the Chimbiri-Yacu on the west bank, in latitude $4^{\circ} 10' S$. This side-stream was so shallow that the light canoe was more often aground than afloat.

On the morning of the second day in this unnamed river, which I have called "Indian Creek" for descriptive purposes, we came upon three large communal huts, built of chonta palm, standing on the edge of a natural clearing some little distance from the bank. In the river were two rafts, or *balsas*, supporting six standing natives with formidable-looking bows and arrows.

After making signs of friendship we landed at the little clearing, and were immediately surrounded by twenty or thirty savages, who did not seem to resent the intrusion of a white man. However, I had been warned of the treacherous character of the natives of this region by several friends in Iquitos, who had heard stories of their treatment of lonely prospectors for the erstwhile golden tree of Amazonia. For this reason I decided to take no chances, and set up camp on the bank of the stream instead of farther into the clearing, near the huts.

By signs I made it understood that we were merely camping for the night, and, after distributing a few

Up the Chimbiri-Yacu

gifts, pretended to ignore the presence of the Indians, who stood about watching us. Although anxious to enter into more friendly conversation with them, and to explore their village, it would have been dangerous to do so without first testing their intentions. With only two semi-civilized native boys forming the defence one does not feel inclined to take more than the inevitable risk attaching to all exploration work.

All through the day I curbed my impatience, contenting myself with an occasional deaf-and-dumb show designed merely to ascertain the name of the tribe. This I discovered to be "Anchuales"—a sub-tribe of the great Huambisa—and keen was my desire to begin investigating their life and customs. When night came I sat outside the tent, with my back to the river and the short Winchester carbine, the favourite weapon in these regions, loaded and handy. Then, when the moon rose and flooded the clearing with its mystic light, I ostentatiously rose to my feet, threw away a half-smoked cigar, and disappeared into the little tent, leaving one of my boys on guard outside.

Crawling under the canvas, which had been purposely left loose at the back, I waited in the shadow for the passage of a cloud across the moon. When at last the river bank close by was plunged into temporary darkness I slipped quietly down the steep bank and under the palm-thatched stern of the canoe. Here I dozed and watched by turns until dawn, and, finding all quiet, I bathed and made ready for the coming day.

Of one thing I had assured myself by this manœuvre, and that was that no immediate attack was contemplated. Thinking that I intended to remain only one night, the Indians, had they been so inclined for the purpose

Up the Chimbiri-Yacu

of robbery or murder, would have made an attack soon after I retired into the tent and the way was clear, except for the Cocama boys, to surround the little camp.

Strengthened by this knowledge, I explained my intention of staying a day or two on the pretext of giving the canoe boys a rest, although the reception of this news by the two Cocamas was anything but reassuring. However, I began my investigations early, and intended to depart suddenly as soon as they were completed.

CHAPTER XV

THE HEAD-HUNTING HUAMBISA

THIS Huambisa tribe are of Mongolian appearance, and do not seem to be either constitutionally or physically strong. They average about 5 feet 4 inches in height, and have abnormally long and thin arms. They do not go about completely naked, like the savages of the Tapajós, Madeira, Aripuanan and other rivers in Brazilian Amazonia, but partly cover themselves with a kind of sash round the loins. This has a fringe of bright feathers on the lower edge. The women wear a one-piece garment suspended from the right shoulder. Both sexes use ear ornaments of cane decorated with the wings of beetles. The men wear bracelets of lizard skin, while the women also adorn themselves with necklaces of coloured seeds.

They paint the face, arms and body with either the red dye of the *achiote* or the blue of another plant (called, I believe, *piau*). A few of the unmarried girls wear anklets of cane. It appears that the painted marks on the face indicate the tribe to which they belong, and is the native equivalent of the white man's passport, while the decorations on the body indicate valour in battle, in much the same way as medals on the breast of a soldier or sailor.

The Head-Hunting Huambisa

The women are far better-looking than the men. Their jet-black hair is cut short in front but allowed to grow long at the back, where it is bound with braid and either twisted round the top of the head or allowed to hang loosely down. A few of the younger girls have small plaits, bound with braid, on each side of the head and tied under the chin. This ugly custom, however, does not seem very popular with the Huambisa maidens.

This tribe seemed to be very clean in their habits. After beating the surface of the river with canoe paddles, about thirty men, women and children bathed and gambolled in the water for nearly an hour. No doubt much of the splashing was done to keep hungry alligators at a respectful distance. Several of these Indians were fairer-skinned than I had at first supposed, and although I could not account for it at the time, I have since learned that in 1849 they descended by night upon several large settlements, murdering the men and carrying away a considerable number of Spanish girls who were never recovered. Doubtless these few white Indians now existing among the copper skins are the descendants of the unfortunate captives.

The Huambisa hunt and fish with the aid of poison. By pounding a certain root and placing the flour so made in a bag which is suspended by a cord in the river, the fish coming near to it are rendered insensible and float to the surface, where they are easily speared. This curious narcotic does not in any way spoil the fish for eating. Tapir, monkey and wild pig are killed by poisoned arrows in a similar way. The weapons used

The Head-Hunting Huambisa

are long, thin spears of *pona* wood, bows, blow-pipes, arrows and darts steeped in poison.

The blow-pipes of the Huambisa are usually about nine feet long. They are made in two halves, which are joined together after the centre has been carefully scooped out to allow of the passage of the dart. A mouth-piece is fitted at one end, the two halves are bound together with grass, and the whole is covered with a kind of gum. The darts are very thin, sharp and poisoned. A wad at one end acts as a plunger; and they are carried in a quiver which is fitted with monkeys' teeth in such a way that when each dart is withdrawn for use the poisoned head is half severed. This is done so that when the point enters the victim it breaks off short and does not drop out of the wound with the weight of the dart itself. The quiver is made of a section of cane with a poison gourd attached, and is slung from the shoulder.

In addition to the fishing carried on with the aid of poison the Huambisa shoot the larger denizens of the rivers, including the *vaca marina* and turtle, with arrows fired from their seven-feet-long bows, made of a hard dark brown wood something like unpolished mahogany. These arrows are tipped with the teeth of animals and feathered for flight. When shooting turtles, and also some fish, the arrow is pointed up at an angle and is made, with wonderful skill, to descend perpendicularly on to the fish or the thick shell of the turtle, which would otherwise cause it to ricochet.

The huts of this tribe are built of chonta palm, and accommodate about ten families. They are seldom less than 60 feet long, by 40 feet broad and 20 high.

The Head-Hunting Huambisa

Inside, the sleeping platforms of cane are arranged round the walls, and the centre is occupied by a ring of fires, together with the earthenware pots and pitchers. As polygamy is the general rule, and no sleeping accommodation seems to be arranged for the second or third wife, it is to be presumed that these unfortunate individuals sleep on the mud floor on each side of the couch of their lord and master. This couch is a curious erection. The cane bedstead extends only as far as the knees, then comes a space, a foot-rail and a fire. When lying upon this the body, as far as the knees, is suspended upon the thin, springy canes, and the feet are prevented from hanging over the end by a separate support or foot-rail. Just beyond this is the fire used to warm the soles of the feet.

Attached to one of the huts in this village was a kind of fighting platform. It was erected on tall palm-stems and raised about eighteen feet above the ground. Reached by a notched tree trunk and raised like a tower over the entrance to the hut, there can be no doubt as to its purpose, that of protecting the communal house from a raid by neighbouring tribes. This lofty little platform was walled, roofed and loopholed for firing arrows and darts. Suspended from the branch of a tree which could be reached from this platform was the *tunduy* (*manguaré* in Brazil), or tocsin of battle, which when struck with a small club can be heard for miles through the surrounding forest. Under this lofty platform the domestic chickens, pigs and dogs seemed all to congregate.

Although there were several dug-out canoes, made from a single cedar log, the favourite mode of transport

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on the river was the raft, or *balsa*, and the journeys performed in these primitive craft are truly wonderful. Whole families voyage for weeks on distant and unknown rivers and lakes, taking with them their few family belongings.

When making a fire the Huambisa either rub two sticks together in a similar way to natives the world over, or, by hitting one stone with another and causing sparks to descend in a shower upon a small mound of dry, powdery substance obtained from the pith of a palm dried in the fierce sunlight. During my sojourn among this tribe I saw only one attempt to make a fire by the latter method. Once a fire is lighted inside the hut it is tended by the women and is seldom allowed to die out.

Both men and women imbibe large quantities of a highly intoxicating drink called *masata*, which is made from the yuca in a way which will give some idea of the psychology of the Huambisa. After being peeled, the yuca is chewed for about ten minutes by the women and spat into a large pot. Water is then added and the foul mass allowed to ferment. When this has gone on for some time it is strained through thick, hand-woven cloth and then drunk in considerable quantities. On one occasion I saw three young Huambisa girls drinking this filthy concoction while chewing the yuca and expectorating into the pot ready for a fresh brew! I could not help contrasting the repulsive habits and customs of this tribe with the cleaner minds and bodies of others whom I had met. The diseases which appear to be rife among the Huambisa are consumption, leprosy, syphilis and malaria.

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Girls are promised in marriage, or really sold as slaves, when they are about six years old and their beauty or ugliness can be more or less determined. Although promised at this early age they do not live with their husbands until twelve or thirteen years old, by which time they are, of course, more fully developed than a European girl of sixteen or seventeen.

Having noticed a small hut standing alone, about thirty yards distant from the large communal palm buildings, I inquired its purpose, and, not being able to understand the signs made, was led across the clearing to its screened entrance by the chief, who wore a helmet of monkey skin. The interior was full of acrid smoke and semi-dark, but a low groan came from beside a smouldering fire, and for a moment I thought my quest had led me into a house of pestilence.

In the dim firelight I could just discern two shrunken and naked forms deposited on a low cane platform. Their features were, however, indistinct in the smoke-laden atmosphere. Then I realized, with a start, that they were corpses, and that the groaning came from relatives squatting on the mud floor. The bodies of the dead are carried to this house and placed on platforms. The witch-doctors then drain the blood from the bodies by a method which cannot be described here, and the fires, made from a wood which gives off chemical fumes, are then lighted and kept going until the shrunken body becomes mummified. It is then covered with bark and buried beneath the floor of the hut in which it dwelt during life.

Here, at last, was the secret death-house of the Huambisa. The floor was hard with congealed blood

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drained from human bodies for unknown years. At frequent intervals this fierce tribe attacks neighbouring villages, capturing the women and girls, and killing the men. The bodies of those slain are then decapitated and the heads brought back in triumph. These ghastly trophies are stuck on lances and the tribe assembles round them for a wild night orgy. Drinking, feasting and unnameable debauchery continue until dawn, when the heads are removed by the witch-doctors to the death-house, and it is here that the process of reduction takes place in secret.

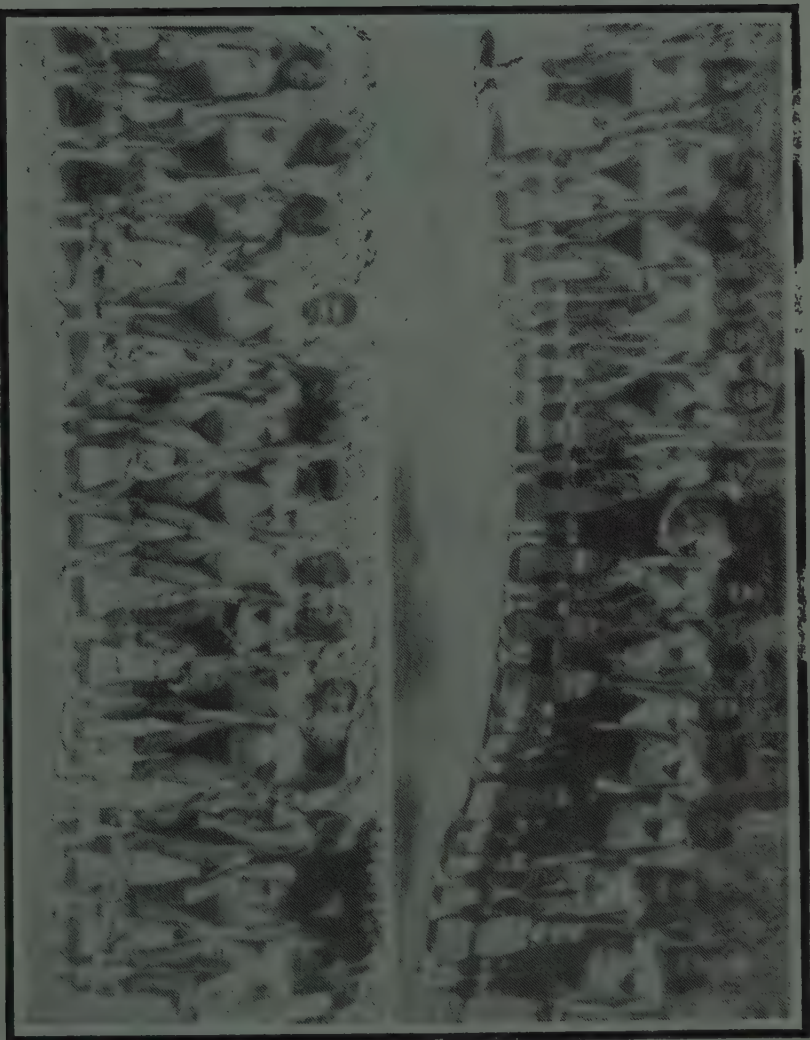
Almost every writer on travel and exploration in Amazonia gives the process by which these human heads are reduced to the size of a small orange without distortion of the features, and nearly all of these processes either differ in essential details or are too vague to be scientifically understandable. It is very doubtful if the actual process has ever been witnessed by a white man during recent times. Cases are known of the *reduced heads of Europeans* finding their way into collectors' knapsacks years after the deed was perpetrated; and, from my own association with Amazonian natives, I am inclined to believe that this would probably be the fate of any white man who witnessed the process against the wishes of the tribe concerned should he be caught in the act. However, it may be of interest to give here the generally accepted method of reduction. The heads are left for several days in the death-house, and, when sufficiently dried, the bones are extracted through the back and base of the skull. Hot stones are then introduced to harden the skin. The lips are re-formed on a piece of wood, or

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sewn up with cotton thread, and the skin slowly dried and shrunk in the same fumes as those which mummify the corpses of the dead.

However this may be, I do not claim any exclusive knowledge, because no tribe with whom I came into contact could be persuaded to divulge the process. Those who know of the death penalty exacted by the Peruvian authorities for the possession of a dried head by an Indian are naturally reluctant to admit anything, and those who are still too savage to have any communication with the Government officers or traders regard those horrible trophies as their most treasured possessions. One thing I learned from this tribe, however, was the spirit which animated the possessor of a shrunken head. It appears that these trophies are worn either round the waist or suspended from the back of the neck of a warrior when going into battle as a warning of the fate of anyone who opposes him, and that, in peace, satisfaction is felt at having the head of the vanquished for ever tied by the lips to girdle or necklace—a frenzy of uncontrolled savagery and hatred. It should be remembered in this connection that tribal blood-feuds are the main cause of the internecine warfare constantly being waged by almost all the savage tribes of the remote interior.

Among other cruel customs this tribe flog their male children for the sole purpose of testing and increasing their powers of endurance, and, with the same object in view, young girls are strung up over a smoky fire in a hammock to drive out evil spirits and to enhance their powers of resisting pain before taking their place in the household of their husband. Before



OCAINAS INDIANS OF THE IGARÁ-PARANÁ.

The beginning of the great tribal dance. Notice the curious ornamentation of the body, the coloured straw

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a feast each member of the tribe takes a strong emetic to enable him to indulge more freely in the orgy. Women remove all superfluous hairs by twisting them round a small piece of split cane, and childbirth is rendered painless, and without danger, by a series of exercises imposed upon children. Some very thin and fragile pottery is made in large quantities by the women without other tools than a small piece of wood shaped like a pestle.

After some time spent among the Huambisa I considered it advisable to return to Iquitos. Although a white man can, with comparative safety, get into friendly contact with, and reside for a few days among, almost any savage Indian tribe, providing tact and assurance are employed, to outstay the welcome and novelty means almost certain death by arrow, spear or poison. During the first few days among a really savage tribe the natural curiosity of the Amazonian Indian, combined with his distrust of every human being, acts as a fairly sure shield. Reasoning in a limited way from his own cramped experience, he first desires to obtain presents, or a knowledge of things which will give him power within his own tribe or against his enemies; then he reasons that no man unless sure of his own fighting capabilities or magic would venture alone among an unknown tribe. In this way the two chief characteristics of the real savage enable explorers and scientists to carry on investigations which would otherwise be impossible. It is the true psychological explanation of many famous feats performed by white travellers among the still savage races of mankind.

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About the return journey to Iquitos nothing need be said, except that I departed very early and before daylight from the Huambisa village, leaving sufficient presents to prevent any treacherous attempt to follow my little expedition down-stream.

CHAPTER XVI

WEIRD CEREMONIES IN THE LAND OF THE WITOTOS

PICTURE a brazen river with its smooth, oily surface moving relentlessly, silently, between two walls of rank and rotting forest, in the steamy, lazy air of the Equatorial day, and you have the beginning of my sixth long Amazonian river journey, from Iquitos towards the upper reaches of the Putumayo.

While every palm-thatch hut, sunlit splash of a rolling dolphin, chattering colony of monkeys, log-like alligator, sudden staccato drumming of rain, roll of thunder and flash of lightning from a purple sky are new, curious or exciting, the day and night blanket of perspiration in which one is for ever wrapped can be temporarily forgotten, and the monotonous scene has not yet had time to burn itself indelibly upon the memory. Soon, however, the heat and silence of midday begin to jar upon the jaded senses. Garish sunlight causes eyes and brain to ache. Then comes a time when the soul of the traveller sickens and he longs for the life-giving breeze of the open spaces.

This was the state to which I was reduced after forty-eight hours of torment by clouds of sand-flies on the Lower Putumayo. So terrible are these winged pests that the little frontier garrisons at Tarapaca, Tacna and Cotuhé live almost continuously in head-net

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and gauntlets. The waters of this fine river are clear and white, while the current is $2\frac{3}{4}$ knots and the navigation comparatively easy. The Putumayo is about 1000 miles long, but its upper reaches are barred by some wonderful falls and rapids. The Rio Yaguas affords a means of communication with the little settlement of Pebas, on the main stream of the Amazon. Above the confluence of this river the Putumayo is much obstructed by small islands, and then comes the mouth of the little-known Pupuna—a river of jet-black water running between walls of dark, forbidding forest.

At a point about 400 miles from its mouth on the Amazon, in lat. $1^{\circ} 4'$ S. and long. $71^{\circ} 53'$ W., the Putumayo is joined by a tributary called the Igara-Paraná, a stream which figured largely in the reports of the commission sent to investigate the atrocities of the Red Rubber Region. It was to this remote little river, in the depths of the great Guiana forest, that I was slowly and painfully making my way, with the object of seeing something of the Witoto and Ocainas Indians who inhabit this region.

At the junction of the two streams the Iquitos-Putumayo boat is exchanged for a private launch belonging to the rubber concessions farther up the smaller river. This change takes place on a broad stretch of open water at a small settlement called Retiro. A few miles farther on, past the little station of Arica, the main stream is left and the launch addresses itself in earnest to the 220 miles of dark, forest-bordered waters of the Igara-Paraná.

In the report of the commission this region is described as comprising about 10,000 square miles, lying



IV. SKETCH-MAP OF THE IGARA-PARANÁ REGION

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between the seventy-second and seventy-fourth degrees of west longitude and the Equator and the second parallel of south latitude. The Indian population of this district was estimated by the Peruvian authorities, before the atrocities, at from 40,000 to 50,000. The majority of these primitive people dwelt along the course of the Igara-Paraná. This river has a course of fully 400 miles, and is navigable for vessels of 100 tons and over from its confluence with the Putumayo to the station of La Chorrera, lying about 220 miles from its mouth.

Along the course of the Igara-Paraná there are numerous small settlements and *barracas* belonging to the main rubber station at La Chorrera; and the wild as well as the semi-civilized tribes in this huge forest enclave are largely employed in the collection of the precious latex, which they sell for trade goods at one or other of these outlying settlements. So much has been written regarding the terrible atrocities committed some years ago by the unscrupulous half-breed agents employed by large concessionaires that it is quite unnecessary to repeat here a story which was made familiar to the whole civilized world. The searchlight of public attention was for a brief space directed upon this comparatively small patch in the great Putumayo forest, and the result was its sudden cleansing. The amazing feature of this incident, to all who knew these dim, distant and mysterious regions, was the focusing of attention entirely on this one area when there were innumerable others where conditions were known to be equally as bad if not worse.

The wild tribes still left alive are now comparatively well treated, although the moral conditions, here as

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elsewhere in Amazonia, still leave very much to be desired if the native races are not to be changed into a half-breed nation, possessing the vices of both the low-class white and the corrupted Indian with the virtues of neither. These Indians have not yet either forgotten or forgiven the terrible past, and view every white man as a feared enemy. Terror alone prevents a massacre in many places.

La Chorrera is a small settlement of chonta and thatch, fronting a wonderful river bay. In the centre of the clearing are the administrative headquarters of the rubber company, whose concessions extend over several thousand square miles. It is, for all practical purposes, the termination of launch communication. Beyond are the rapids of the Chorrera. From this little trading post paths have been cut through the forest to outlying stations, and away back from these paths are the villages of the Witoto nation. The word "Witoto" in the Indian vernacular means "mosquito," and this great tribe have been so called because of their thin, misshapen limbs and curiously fat bodies. To this rule, however, there is an exception. The Ocainas, whose habitat is in the forests along the Igara-Paraná, some fifty miles before reaching Chorrera, are among the best-formed and cleanest-skinned races of Amazonia. It is extremely doubtful if these people form part of the Witoto group. So mixed are the Indian races that it is impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion on this or many similar points.

Soon after my arrival at Chorrera I heard of a great tribal dance which was to take place among the Ocainas, at one of their villages in the forest near to a station

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called Fititia. A launch carried me down-stream to this little trading depôt, well fortified against attack, and then a short walk through the forest brought me to the immense thatched huts of this curious tribe.

Preparations for the great dance, which was to take place on the following day, were already in progress. Completely naked girls and children were being elaborately painted with vegetable dyes of vivid colouring, and some of these seemed rather to resent the premature intrusion of a white man, so I confined my attention to the huge and perfectly made huts of this tribe. One thing, however, I could not help observing was the fine physique of the Ocainas compared with other tribes of the forest.

The communal huts of these Indians are immense palm-thatch erections which could only have been made with infinite labour. Tent-shape, they are at least 25 feet high by 30 feet broad and over 100 feet in length. The doorway is 6 feet high by 5 feet broad, and the eaves of these family dwellings come right down to the ground. The whole interior is semi-dark, and until one's eyes become accustomed to the subdued light bumps and falls are frequent. Naked bodies brush unconcernedly past, and dimly glowing fires are the only spots of light. Earthenware pots and pans stand about on the hard mud floor, and these, I noticed, are provided with handles, and some are ornamented with curious designs. There are also wicker baskets full of fruit, pestles and mortars for grinding farina, and little palm-leaf fans. Of beds, however, there was no sign beyond some piles of dry leaves upon which children were sleeping.



(1) ITOGAPUK WOMAN AND CHILD. (2) THE WIFE OF THE ITOGAPUK CHIEF.
 (3) CARIJONA INDIAN WITH HEAVY EAR-RINGS. (4) CONIBOS INDIAN DRESSED
 IN A CUSMA.

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On the following morning I left camp early and walked into the little square in front of the huts to watch the final preparations. Some of the men were clothed in jacket and trousers, others considered a small apron sufficient for both needs and appearances. The older women wore a loose white robe, but the younger girls were, however, entirely naked, and the finishing touches to the elaborate painting of their bodies were being given by the older squaws. Most of them were comparatively well formed, with all the superfluous hairs on the body removed. In colour they varied from smoky bronze to almost white. One child, whose only adornment was a curious necklace of white stone discs, was the lightest-skinned Indian seen during my travels in Amazonia. The Ocainas women wear their hair either long and hanging loose over their shoulders, or else cut quite short. The hair of the children of both sexes, as well of that of the men, is cut in this way.

The fantastic designs, principally on the legs and body, must have taken hours to paint, and would prove difficult afterwards to remove. Several of the older girls wore curious leg dresses with tassels, others had anklets, and a few coloured straw waistbelts, formed and worn like a loose corset. Apparently the legs of some had been coated with the sticky latex of the rubber-tree and then dipped in the fluff from a palm. The men carried dancing-sticks in each hand. The whole scene was bacchanalian.

The dance commenced with a swaying line of gaily painted but otherwise unadorned girls slowly advancing and retreating in the little palm-encircled clearing.

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The men linked arms and advanced into the arena to the accompaniment of wild cries. Catching hold of the hands of their partners they began a curiously monotonous series of weird contortions of the body. Those with the dancing-sticks stamped the ground with their feet as well as with the long poles, and everyone chanted and shrieked, while the older women sat on the ground beating a kind of tom-tom. When it was all over the girls walked about in their finery without the least embarrassment, but never once was there anything savouring of indecency or vulgarity. This dance was photographed recently by the Brazilian explorer and cinematographer, Señor Silverio Santos, and the pictures illustrating it were kindly given to me by that gentleman while on a recent visit to the region.

This dance of the Ocainas was more bacchanalian than barbaric, and did not in the least resemble the weird ceremonies I had witnessed in the moonlit forests a thousand miles to the south. This tribe is now comparatively peaceful although quite uncivilized, and most of them are employed to hunt wild rubber in the dark forests of this vast region.

The Ocainas believe in a good spirit called *Usinamwe*, and an evil one called *Taipenu*. They also worship *Itoma*, the sun, and *Fuey*, the moon. When a chief dies he is buried under the mud floor of his hut ; others are interred with all they possessed in life at a distance from the village. The *macanas*, or wooden swords, blow-pipes and dancing-sticks are the symbols of chieftainship and consequently are not buried with their dead owner, but are handed down from one generation to another. The principal article of diet is

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cassava cake. It is made of the pounded root of the mandioca, from which the poison has been extracted, formed into a paste and baked on a flat earthenware plate. It is doughy and sour in flavour.

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of this tribe is their custom, after perspiring freely, of rubbing their bodies with certain leaves to remove all impurities from the skin. Whether or not this is the reason for their clear complexions it is difficult to say. Of all the Amazon tribes with whom I came in contact these Ocainas had by far the most perfect figures and skins. They bathed every day in the river, and, being devoid of old and usually very musty clothes, they were without that nauseating aroma which is so frequently the hallmark of the half-civilized Indian. If contrasts are needed, these men and women should be compared with the pot-bellied Caripunas of the Madeira and the fever-mottled Indians of the Madeira-Purus swamps.

From the village of the Ocainas I travelled north, through the forest, and by canoe, on the Igara-Paraná, above the rapids, to the country of the cannibal Nonuyas, a branch of the Andokes. The huts of this tribe are situated in the heart of the jungle, about thirty miles from the river, at a point called Ultimo Retiro. These Indians, although no longer openly hostile to white men, still retain some of their cannibalistic tendencies. Prisoners captured from neighbouring tribes in the almost continual internecine warfare are carefully fattened, given wives, and then killed when a big feast has been arranged. Only certain parts of the body are eaten, such as the brains to obtain wisdom or cunning, the heart to derive valour, and the right arm for strength.

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These orgies take place only in the depths of the forest and at night, when the signal for the assembly of the tribes has been given out by the *manguaré*.

In appearance the Nonuyas are repulsively ugly. Their skins are of a yellowish brown colour, often curiously stained and mottled. The men wear the usual loin-cloth, but the women go about entirely naked. For personal adornment they wear necklaces of human teeth and the plumes of birds stuck in the hair. They are armed with a kind of wooden sword, as well as a blow-pipe and lance. The dialect of these tribes appears to possess all the requirements of a proper language and, when spoken, is by no means harsh or guttural. They worship the sun and moon.

Several tribes in this region, including the Nonuyas, chew both coca and tobacco. From the leaves of the former they obtain cocaine, which enables them to withstand fatigue, pain and hunger to a remarkable degree, but they age rapidly. In this way they resemble the Aymara Indians of the Bolivian Tableland, the difference being in the way the coca is chewed. The hill tribes masticate the natural leaf in conjunction with a little ordinary lime or potash, while the forest tribes roast the coca leaves and then pound them, together with wood-ash, and chew the resulting mess. The saliva frees the cocaine. The Nonuyas, and other tribes of the Alto Igara-Paraná, pierce the division of the nose and insert a piece of cane. The women remove all superfluous hairs from the body, but their limbs are so twisted and misshapen that they present a sorry sight.

Among the little-known Carijonas of the Caquetá region of Colombia, which adjoins the Putumayo

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district, a curious potion is made from a plant called *yagé*, which grows wild and in considerable abundance in the thick and unhealthy forest. Preparations of *yagé* have not only proved beneficial in cases of beri-beri, now known to be a deficiency disease due to extreme anæmia, but they have also the curious effect of placing anyone who takes them in a condition in which full consciousness is lost, and the subconscious mind is thus open to receive telepathic communication!

This may sound incredible, but there is considerable evidence that such is the case. The first discovery was made in 1912 by Dr R. Z. Bayon, who penetrated into this difficult region and actually prepared the *yagé* mixture used by the savage Carijonas Indians and their medicine men. He experimented with it upon himself and also on native sufferers from beri-beri, curing all those who took it. In order to prove its telepathic effects Colonel C. Morales, commanding a military detachment in a neighbouring district, volunteered for the experiment, and Dr Bayon has publicly reported that his patient immediately became conscious of the death of his father and the illness of a sister living in another part of Colombia, and divided by hundreds of miles of impenetrable forest. The doctor adds that Colonel Morales was very weak at the time through lack of proper food, and that he was of a nervous and intelligent disposition. It was a month later that a courier reached the outpost in which the experiment took place bearing letters containing the news of the death and the illness at the time stated by Colonel Morales in the subconscious state. Dr Bayon calls the crude precipitates he then used "Telepatina,"

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and commends this mysterious plant to explorers and scientists in these regions.

Some of these Carijonas Indians, who are supposed to number about 50,000, cross the Caquetá into the Trans-Putumayo, and they admit manufacturing a kind of beverage with a bluish tinge from the climbing plant they refer to as *yagé*, and of which there appear to be four varieties, all with similar characteristics. The medicine men make highly concentrated solutions by evaporation. Although called by the generic name of "Carijonas," these Indians really belong to many different tribes, each of which has a dialect of its own, but several who were questioned agreed as to the use and mental effects of this mysterious drug.

It first dims the vision and sensibilities. Madness appears to follow—whether through continued imbibing or as a result of the first dose has not yet been established—and in the delirium of the insane state men imagine themselves to be beasts of the forest, often living for days alone in the thick undergrowth, and tearing to pieces anyone who approaches them. This may, quite conceivably, be due to its effects on the savage mind. In later stages the victim becomes semi-cataleptic, but is able to describe events of which he can never have either seen or heard in full consciousness. European cities, music and current events have been pictured in detail unprovided for by the meagre vocabulary of the native dialect, and only possible of communication with the aid of rough drawings. Among the half-caste rubber gatherers who have entered these remote forests several have become addicted to this curious dope, partly because it dulls

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their sensibilities, especially where pain, hunger and fatigue are concerned, and affords relief from beri-beri, but also on account of its curious effects, which they describe as enabling them to live far away from the sombre and unhealthy forests.

In one small native village on the Alto Caquetá a white man who has become a slave to these mysterious native drugs is living the life of a savage. He is the *cacique*, or chief, of a sub-tribe of the Andokes. Educated in Europe, he went to this region twenty-five years ago, and to-day he joins in the hideous orgies of these wild men. Incredible as this story of the mysterious *yagé* may sound to those unacquainted with the curious poisons used in the great forests of the Amazon, it should be remembered that the coca used by the Aymara Indians for unknown centuries now yields the "white snow" of science and civilized debauchery, and that the witch-doctors and *caboclo* healers of these forests employ, for a multitude of common ailments, far more potent medicines than are known to, or used by, civilized scientists.

The Carijonas insert a stick into the lobes of their ears, and it was from this practice that they obtained their name. In colour they are a light bronze, and have very flat faces, receding foreheads, thick lips, coarse black hair worn long at the back, and wear no clothes whatever. The young girls and children are not nearly so ugly, unhealthy looking or repulsive as the men and older women. This is probably due to the effects of the continual drugging with coca, *yagé* and tobacco juice. They use various poisons for their arrows and darts, mostly curaré, except for fishing

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and killing small lizards and frogs, which they eat in unbelievable numbers. Their huts are the usual communal dwellings of palm-thatch and chonta wood, but have no doorways. A loose portion of the thatch is lifted to gain access or egress. Occasionally one meets a Carijona with ears stretched almost to his shoulders by the insertion of rings carrying heavy weights; anyone so disfigured is almost certain to be either a sub-tribal chief or witch-doctor. They make wonderful fibre and feather hammocks which they trade for supplies through other, more docile, Indian tribes, or direct to travelling *caboclo* traders on the Upper Caquetá river. Their language appears to be harsh, guttural and confined to a very few words, all with a similar sound. However, native dialects when heard for the first time generally give this impression, and therefore closer investigation is necessary before anything definite can be stated.

Although in the Caquetá-Putumayo-Napo region there are several hundred small and differently named sub-tribes, each consisting of a few families, the six great nations from which they are all descended are: the Witotos of the Igara-Paraná and Putumayo, the Ocainas of the Igara-Paraná, who are by far the most intelligent, the cannibal Carijonas of the Caquetá, the Andokes of the Alto Igara-Paraná, and the Boras of the Lower Caquetá. In 1903 the fierce Andokes, of whom the Nonuyas are a branch, waged such a fierce war against the few Colombian rubber gatherers that the latter were compelled to ask for assistance from Iquitos.

It was in this region that Émile Robuchon, the French explorer, who was engaged by the Peruvian

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Government to study the general conditions of the Putumayo, met his death under circumstances which have remained a complete mystery. Robuchon had been a considerable time on the Igara-Paraná and other rivers. He had married a Witoto woman, and, from photographs left behind, it would seem was on friendly terms with a number of tribes. He never completed the book he was writing, and which afterwards appeared under the editorship of a Peruvian consul in Manáos. It was said that he met his death at the hands of cannibal Indians. However this may be, queer stories are occasionally told in the camps along this wild frontier. All that Robuchon left behind in the Putumayo is a breed of dogs similar to his own faithful Great Dane.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONIBOS OF THE UCAYALI

THE man-eating Indians of the Upper Amazon forests cannot be called cannibals solely because their feasts of human flesh have been attributed to their desire to assimilate the virtues of their victims by devouring them, and not to any special love of this form of food. The problem becomes complicated, however, when a South Sea Island cannibal also explains his liking for human flesh much in the same way as a resident of Clapham or Hoboken explains his liking for roast beef, by the simple statement of its strengthening qualities, and side by side with this assertion comes the Cashibos Indian statement that by devouring an enemy the physical strength of the conquered passes into the conqueror.

That there are other differences I am well aware, but they are of such a shadowy nature that it would seem, for all practical purposes, anthropophagy should be called cannibalism. The reason for, or degree of a depravity should not affect the general classification so as to render much that is written regarding the absence of cannibals in Amazonia utterly misleading. Many thousand square miles of forest are still dominated by Indians with these propensities, and foremost among them are the Cashibos and Nonyuas tribes.

After a rather prolonged stay in Iquitos an oppor-

The Conibos of the Ucayali

tunity at last presented itself to enter the country of these savages, which lies in the jungles, away back from the main stream, on the west bank of the Ucayali and Pachitea. To reach these rivers entails only a few days' journey by launch from Iquitos, as they form the fluvial highway between the Amazon, the Andes and the Pacific. The real difficulties begin when these rivers are entered and the silent, matted forest stretches away for hundreds of miles to every point of the unexplored and mist-enveloped horizon.

So impenetrable are the forests that a traverse of, say, 200 miles might take any time up to a year to accomplish with the aid of a number of cutters and carriers. So bad is the reputation of the tribes who inhabit these areas that a supply of labour from the semi-civilized Indian communities along the banks of the main streams would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. To enter the thick forest alone means certain death. A German scientist who attempted it never returned. The bones of a rubber gatherer of Masisea were found, quite recently, by the ashes of a fire on the forest plains of Sacramento. Mr Whaley of San Juan was killed by Indians because, after repeated warnings, he entered their territory; Kroehle, the German, who lived among and photographed the Cashibos, eventually died from the wounds inflicted by their arrows. The history of the attempts to explore this region are full of similar tragedies. Farther south, where the Rivers Perené and Ené unite to form the Tambo, the Un-goninos, a branch of the great Campas nation, oppose the passage of white men through their territory, and, although they are not cannibals, the mule-trains and

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canoes coming down from the Andes to the forests *en route* to Iquitos are compelled to skirt round this region. To attempt to cross it would inevitably lead to disaster. From these few facts the difficulty of finding a passage into the more remote forests, away from the main stream, will be better understood.

The Ucayali is a broad river of glassy, greenish grey water running swiftly, and with many dangerous whirlpools, between distant mist-enshrouded banks covered with low forest. So strong is the current that launches and other craft, working their way up-stream, invariably hug the jungle-covered shore wherever possible. Here and there are patches of vivid green swamp grass from which white-plumed egrets and red and black *soldados* rise in flocks.

The sunsets on this broad river equal in sublime grandeur those on the great Madeira. Masses of red and purple cloud, with here and there fiery streamers shooting athwart the heavens, are reflected in detail on the glassy surface of the river. So vivid are these lights that, in contrast, the forest turns to brown and black.

Every now and then a small canoe is passed in which a Cocama Indian is standing with poised lance ready to spear the piracacú, or paiche, as it is called in Peru. This is the largest fresh-water fish in the world and often attains a weight of 300 lb., with a length of six feet. The flesh is cured and salted in a similar manner to that of the codfish, and is an important article of food among all river dwellers. The tongue of the piracacú, when dried, resembles a file, and is used by the natives of Amazonia as a substitute for this tool. Among

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other fish caught by these Indians is the tucanaré, and the piranha, or river shark. On some of the sandy bars farther down-stream the Amazonian tortoise (*Podocremis expansa*), which is commonly called á turtle, is remorselessly hunted not only for its flesh but also for its eggs. It is one of the largest creatures of its kind in the world, and also forms a staple food of the river dwellers, both European and native. These turtles, which in certain rivers still abound in thousands, not only yield food, but their shells serve as vessels for domestic use. This creature deposits its eggs in the soft, steamy sand-islands as soon as they appear above the surface after the subsidence of the great annual floods. Being well aware of this, the natives are constantly on the watch, and as soon as the laying is over rake the eggs out of the holes made by the turtle as a nest. The river dolphin is, however, more plentiful on the Ucayali than the turtle. Alligators also are numerous, and are killed for their fat, which is used, with a curious form of massage, for many ailments, and especially rheumatism.

Around the small settlement of Sarayacu, on the west side of the Ucayali, there are several Conibos villages. One of these, on the river bank, is inhabited by semi-civilized Indians who are wonderful canoe-men, and others, farther inland, by tribes who are still savage, although not openly hostile to white men.

I disembarked from the launch with my two Cocama boys—those who had been with me on the Chimbiri-Yacu—and, after hiring a canoe from an old mission station, proceeded up a small stream called, locally,

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the Rio Sarayacu, which runs inland for many miles towards a low range of hills about which little is known. This stream leaves the Ucayali near to the settlement of Sarayacu.

There would have been great difficulty in locating and approaching the huts of the up-river Conibos had it not been possible, first, to persuade a guide of the same tribe, who lived in the semi-civilized village on the Ucayali, to accompany us. To make the tame Indian lead the white man to the savage of the same tribe is extremely difficult, and can only be done through some intermediary who is in the confidence of both. In this case it was the old padre at Sarayacu, who ministers to the bodies of the savage and the souls of the semi-civilized.

After two days on this pestilential little river, with walls of matted forest on both sides shutting out the sunlight, we camped early in the afternoon to allow the guide to go on ahead in the canoe to warn the Indians of our approach, and to explain that we were friends with presents to distribute. That night was one of the worst I had so far spent in Amazonia. In addition to mosquitoes I was suffering torment from prickly heat round the body and was scarcely able to lie still for five consecutive minutes. However, the hours of darkness in this land of the sunrise are mercifully short, and after breakfast the guide returned and explained that we could proceed to the huts, which, it appeared, were only about two miles farther up the shallow river.

The village of the Conibos consisted of four cane huts, without side walls, built on crude platforms.

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Each hut sheltered about fifteen people. Unlike other savages on the remote rivers of this vast region they did not crowd round when we landed, but stood awkwardly about, regarding us with unmistakable signs of suspicion. However, this attitude thawed a little when a handful of pocket-knives was produced from my knapsack, and some opportunity was thus afforded me of studying them in detail.

The children, of whom there appeared to be an enormous number, were totally unclothed, but both men and women wore a coarse brown *cusma*, or single-piece garment with a hole for the head and neck. They were of a deep bronze colour, with faces ornamented by red and black stripes, giving them a most hideous appearance. The younger children, who were not painted in this way, appeared quite decent-looking. The hair of both men and women was long and held tight to the head by a cane band. One man, who appeared to be the chief, wore a metal ring through the nose and a bird's feather in his hair.

In striking contrast to the smooth skins of the Ocainas this tribe appeared to be covered with pimples, blotches and sores. Whether or not this was due to the mosquitoes or *piums* I cannot say. Even the bodies of the children were in a similar state, and seemed to produce a kind of dry eczema. Beyond the collection of sarsaparilla, which grows wild in the forests around, they seem to do but little work. The small plantations close to the village were sadly neglected, and at first could scarcely be distinguished from the forest.

The Conibos speak the *pana* language of almost all the known tribes of the Peruvian Montaña. They have

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a bad reputation for treachery and murder, which began as early as 1695, when a Franciscan missionary, named Rieter, was killed. Since then spasmodic efforts have been made to civilize them, but in almost every case murder has resulted. Those who dwell on the banks of the Ucayali profess Christianity, but only a very thin veneer covers the savage instinct.

One of the customs of this tribe is to kill off the aged and infirm. A son deems it a kindness to drown, strangle or poison his father or mother when they are no longer able to fish, hunt or prepare food. One old woman whom I noticed seemed particularly anxious to show her activity, so much so that, had she not been so desperately in earnest, I could not have refrained from laughing. Relating this to the padre at Sarayacu, he told me of the cruel custom, and the reason for the ludicrous activity became apparent. Children with an abscess on the foot have been thrown into the river because they were temporarily unable to walk. When we were leaving the Conibos village the old woman, whose body was nothing but dried, parchment-coloured skin and bone, insisted upon wading almost waist-deep into the river to give a final push to the canoe. I was glad, when hearing afterwards about this dreadful custom, that she had received the most coveted gift of all, a box of needles, pins, nails and fish-hooks. Perhaps they will enable her to purchase the few more years of life she evidently desires.

Returning down-stream to Sarayacu, I purchased the canoe and succeeded in getting the mestitzo captain of the launch, which was proceeding up the Ucayali on the following day, to allow it to be towed alongside.



MANDANO INDIAN OF THE UPPER NAPO.

These Indians are head-hunters. The mottled effect, obtained with vegetable dyes, renders them difficult to detect in the thick forest.



DWARF INDIANS OF THE PAMPAS SACRAMENTO.



PAINTED DECORATION OF OCAINAS WOMEN.

The colour scheme is red, blue and black outlined with white, on a pale bronze background. The plaited straw corsets lend distinction but are worn principally by the debutante. The hose is of sticky rubber, feathers, earth or monkey skin.



THE LAST OF THE GREAT DANCE.

Only when the dance is over do the men of the tribe mingle with the young women.

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It was my intention, before reaching the Bocca Pachitea, some miles above the little settlement of Masisea, to leave the steamboat, which was going up-stream as far as the depth of water would allow in order to set down its four other passengers, all of whom were coloured in varying degrees, at the nearest point on the overland trail to the Andes and the Pacific. On the west bank of the Ucayali there is a particularly wild belt of country inhabited by Cashibos, or Vampire Indians. To explore in this region a canoe would be needed, and, as there are only a few settlements along this river, it was essential to take one with us.

Little that was worth recording occurred during the voyage up the Ucayali river, which is the recognized route between the Amazon and the Pacific coast. The only settlements along this 500 miles of river and semi-explored country are Contamana, a pretty little place built along the river bank, and Masisea, where there is a wireless station. A few miles below this latter place the Ucayali is joined by the Rio Aquaitia. From here onwards the forests, both eastward and westward, are quite unexplored, and are the habitat of several fierce tribes, including the cannibal Cashibos. The word "Cashibo" in the *pana* language means "vampire bat," and these Indians obtained that name because of their bloodthirsty propensities.

At a point on the west bank of the Ucayali, in latitude 8° S., I disembarked from the launch and boarded the canoe, which had been towed alongside quite successfully. When loaded with provisions and my two Cocama boys it floated so low in the water that I was forced, very reluctantly, to leave behind with

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the mestitzo captain a considerable amount of those "extras" which mean so much when away from civilization. However, there was nothing else to do, and we waved farewells to the small steamer and paddled towards a gap in the low jungle of the ill-famed Pampas Sacramento, made by the little Aquaitia.

This river, which leads out of the Ucayali, is one of several unimportant streams hereabouts. It is the last little tributary on the west side before reaching the Bocca Pachitea, and its position is shown on the excellent map of the Peruvian Ministry of the Interior in latitude 8° S. For about twenty miles after leaving the mother stream the Aquaitia winds towards the S.S.W., through very flat, low-lying country covered with palm jungle. During the first day and night on this river so voracious were the mosquitoes that even clothes were no protection. Had it not been for the head-net and gauntlets carried, I should have ignominiously retreated to the open Ucayali. Never during all my travels in various parts of the world have I endured such torture from these demoniacal little pests. Wrists, ankles, legs, arms, neck and face were so swollen and sore that it was difficult to keep clothes on and to prevent the blood-poisoning which would result from continual scratching. During this terrible twenty-four hours we slept aboard the canoe, with the mosquito net covering the whole interior. My two Cocamas also suffered, but of course only to a much less degree, although they appeared glad, when night came, to crawl under the dirty white netting.

The heat was made far greater by my having to sleep in head-net and gauntlets even under the mosquito

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curtain. However, the air cleared somewhat and the maddening drone eased considerably towards evening on the second day, when the shallow stream became more shallow and difficult to navigate by broadening out into a miniature lake. That night we camped, but a proper rest was impossible because of the danger from savage tribes whose country we had now entered.

CHAPTER XVIII

AMONG THE VAMPIRE INDIANS OF THE PAMPAS SACRAMENTO

EARLY on the following morning, while skirting the shore of the shallow lake, we received the first intimation of the presence of Indians. An arrow splashed into the water some distance ahead of the canoe. It was an anxious moment, and even the eyes of my two boys showed the nervous tension. Whether regarded as a warning or merely as indicating the presence of Indians firing at fish mattered little. Unless a kind of friendship, or at least a form of passive resistance, could be gained from the savages evidently in the surrounding forest it would be impossible to retreat, and equally as impossible to advance. For the first time out of many similar occasions I felt distinctly uncomfortable. The main factor of safety—a good line of retreat—was absent, and everything depended on the goodwill of an unknown tribe in a region of bad repute.

Action was essential, but how was it to be commenced? There was no sign on the low jungle-covered banks of either Indians or their habitations. Making for a sandy spit which jutted out into the shallow lake the canoe grounded and we waded through several inches of water on to the bar. After ascertaining that it was not covered by the natural rise

Among the Vampire Indians

of the river at night I decided to camp, because no one could approach from either the lake or shore without exposing themselves on the open stretch of ground.

That night I sat up on guard until relieved at dawn, when I turned in for an hour or two. Scarcely had I got to sleep, however, before one of the boys came into the tent and made signs for me to follow him. Less than fifty yards from the camp four sticks with four shorter ones tied across them had been stuck in the sand, and an arrow was lying on the ground pointing in the direction from which we had come. The Cocama shook his head and muttered.

Having heard of similar signs being used by the Nambiquaras in Matto Grosso, I cudgelled my brain for a solution. Probably the four tall sticks meant an equal number of men, and the arrow pointing downstream indicated a direction. Was the arrow a warning to return the way we had come? If so, what was the meaning of the small cross-sticks? No solution, beyond ominous shakes of the head, was forthcoming from the Cocama. On the other hand, the sticks might mean that the same number of Indians were encamped in the direction of the arrow.

After puzzling for some time without result I decided to leave presents beside the sticks and to load up the canoe, but allow the tent to remain standing, and explore the edge of the jungle in the direction indicated by the arrow. All through the stifling heat of the tropical day we paddled and searched without avail, but on returning to the sand-bar at night found the presents gone. The tent and the mysterious sticks

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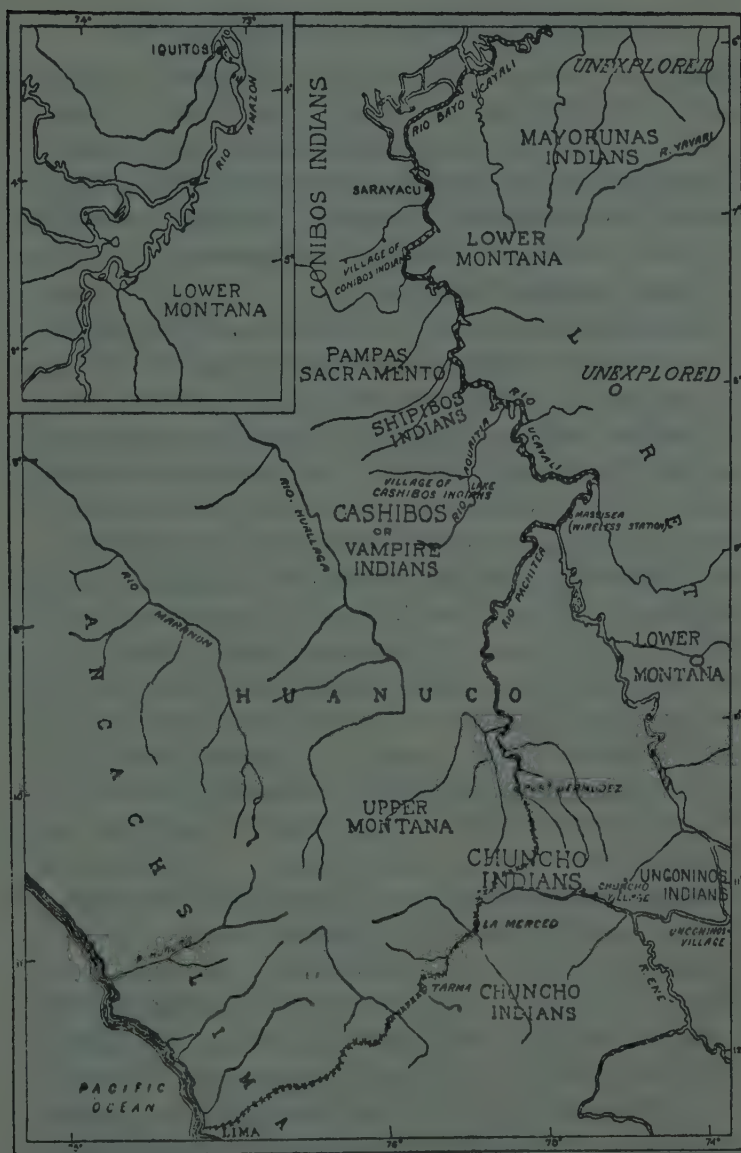
were, however, untouched. Before nightfall I placed my shaving-glass as another gift and tied to it a rough sketch of an Indian and a white man standing opposite each other, with their weapons lying on the ground and their arms above their heads.

Again I sat beside the canoe all night, fearing to trust to the vigilance of the Cocamas. When the light of the new day grew strong enough for me to see around I approached the sticks. The shaving-glass and sketch had been taken, and the sand of the bar showed the impress of several naked feet. They came from and returned to the shallow water of the lake—a proof that the Indians had used a canoe.

This time I did not replace the presents taken, but left another sketch showing a white man giving a string of beads to an Indian standing beside a tent. On the following night this also was removed, and I heard the canoe being pushed off from the bar by placing my ear close to the surface of the still water of the lake.

With this I rested content, and on the morning of the second day a canoe approached in which four Indians were seated, paddling slowly. I hailed them and received a reply. Then the paddling ceased and the canoe rested on the surface about 200 yards from the shore. To carry on dumb show at this range was impossible, so I beckoned the Indians to come closer, at the same time laying down my rifle and walking into the shallow water towards them, holding out a string of beads.

For some minutes they sat motionless, and then cautiously paddled forward until about ten yards



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V. SKETCH-MAP OF THE PERUVIAN MONTAÑA (Amazon-Andes Route)

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distant from where I was standing ankle-deep in the water. I made it known by signs that I was a friend and desired to speak to them. Every time I attempted to advance they hastily backed water with the paddles. For over half-an-hour this ridiculous see-saw movement continued, until at last I walked back towards the tent, and there sat down and waited.

Gradually they gained courage, first paddling their canoe along the shore towards the tent, and then getting out into the water and wading towards me. I stood up, and to show them that I was unarmed raised my hands above my head. This action was copied by three of the figures who now walked up the beach very distrustfully. Keeping my hands outstretched I slowly lowered them and began making signs that I had gifts for them. Some tablets of scented soap were placed on the sand and they were eagerly grabbed by one of the Indians, while the others watched my movements. Then an animated conversation was carried on by drawings in the sand. It appeared that the sticks with cross-pieces meant huts, and the arrow did not point in their direction but was supposed to come from it.

In appearance these Indians were of medium stature and of a very pale yellow-bronze colour. In the sunlight they resembled the Chinese. All four were dressed in long dark brown *cusmas* of coarse native cloth. They had partly shaven heads, and round their necks wore a curious ornament of beetles' wings finished off in front with the head of a bat. Their hair was jet-black and held close to the head by a band of cane ornamented with birds' feathers.

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One, only, had brought a long, thin spear from the canoe.

After a lengthy endeavour to explain my mission with the aid of signs, symbols and a few words of *pana*, learned at Sarayacu, a more friendly atmosphere was created. I took advantage of this to point out that whereas I had laid my weapons on the ground one of the Indians still carried a spear. Several sand drawings were necessary to make this position clear, but as soon as it dawned upon the limited intelligence of these natives the spear was laid on the ground, but nothing would move its possessor from the spot where it lay. Having accomplished the object I had in view, that of stimulating mutual trust, there was nothing to be gained by pressing the matter to a dangerous degree. The next problem was to induce this small party of Indians, who were evidently out on a hunting and fishing expedition, to guide us to their village, and at the same time to do all that was humanly possible to ensure our own safety.

There is a limit to the number of presents which it is advisable to give wholly savage Indians before one's purpose in their midst is accomplished. To surfeit them at first is to make them dangerously discontented later on, when the flow begins to slacken, as it very soon must unless unlimited transport facilities are available. The history of early exploration work among the Eskimos affords ample proof of the forethought required when conducting this form of bribery.

Having explained my desire to visit their village, and at the same time my willingness to give them presents in return for their help in afterwards getting

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back to the Ucayali, I deliberately turned my back upon them and went into the tent, ostensibly to obtain something, but in reality to test how far their friendship extended when no longer *vis-à-vis*. After a few minutes I returned with some biscuits which, after eating one myself, I offered to the Indians. Evidently hungry, they devoured them without waiting, as is usual, to see if any evil effects were produced by the first mouthful.

Eventually, after some discussion among themselves, they motioned me to embark in our own canoe. The breaking of camp occupied about half-an-hour, during which time I endeavoured to get on more friendly terms, but with very little success. However, just before starting I took out my tobacco pouch and, seeing the greedy look, distributed sufficient of the precious weed for several pipes, and this seemed to have more effect than anything so far attempted.

After paddling across the shallow lake, going north towards some low, forest-clad hills, the huts appeared on an open patch of grey, ash-like sand surrounded by low jungle. No sooner had we landed than I realized the danger of the position. Although the four hunters who had come into our camp were clothed and had evidently been in previous contact with civilization, those in the village were entirely naked and almost hostile in their attitude. None of the Indians was armed when we landed, but within fifteen minutes spears, bows and murderous-looking war-clubs appeared everywhere.

The history of the Cashibos is one of relentless warfare against the white man and also the neighbouring

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tribes of Shipibos Indians. Between the years 1651 and 1714 they are reputed to have killed and eaten twenty-seven priests sent by the Spaniards to attempt their conversion to Christianity. About forty years later they descended upon the missions of the Cerro de la Sal and destroyed them all. Up to quite recent years very few explorers had been among them, and Lieutenant Smyth, R.N. (1832), Lieutenant Herndon (1852), Gabriel Sala (1899) and Juan Sotomayor (1900) are the only ones who have, so far as is generally known, left any record of this fierce tribe.

With these facts in mind I decided on immediate action. Turning to the guides I asked to be taken to the *Huayri*, or chief, and was led towards one of the large but very poorly constructed palm-thatch communal *tambos*. Here an old Cashibo with beard, *cusma* and shaven head was diligently sucking an open sore in his own forearm. Ceasing this absorbing occupation, he rose up and tottered forward to where I awaited him.

After the customary bestowal of presents I explained briefly the object of my visit, and having apparently received his benediction, was given a curious amulet of cane with queer designs worked on it. After this I was apparently free to make camp and walk about the village, but the spears and clubs did not disappear from the yellow hands of their owners.

Although the women seem to go about entirely naked until either married or aged, the men either wear a simple loin-cloth or a long brown sleeveless robe. The Cashibos appear to favour the raft as a means of transport rather than the canoe, for although there

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were several of the latter craft on the shore near the village the number of rafts appeared to be equal to that of the population.

The women and children are not so ugly or dirty as the men. Whether this is due to the absence of an unwashed and decidedly obnoxious-smelling *cusma* it is difficult to say, but I formed the impression that some of these pale-skinned women and young girls belonged to another tribe which was of much shorter stature than the Cashibos. However this may be, they were far more communicative and friendly, although, for obvious reasons, I could not encourage this.

During the second day here I asked one of our guides where he expected to go to when he died. The result was a little disconcerting. He pointed to a bird which was cleaning up the remains of my last meal. Trying to probe the matter further seemed quite useless until the idea came to discover if there was a recognized burial-place. Hours of questioning first one and then another revealed the fact that the dead Cashibo is not buried. The aged are killed and eaten, because it is considered better to be devoured by a friend than by birds or beasts of prey. Proceeding on these lines I tried to differentiate between the body and the soul, and although no definite results were obtained, it seems that these natives believe that having eaten the heart, brain, eyes, ears and hands they absorb the good qualities, cunning and spirit of the departed. So far as I could make out they do not kill and eat captives of other tribes, because they look upon their neighbours as inferior in all respects to themselves, and therefore unworthy to be absorbed.

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They understand the word "Christo" as the God of the white man, but do not seem to have had many direct dealings with either the missions or trading posts. The area of hilly, jungle country which they inhabit is practically rubberless, and consequently there is little to induce the trader to enter a region of such evil repute. This probably accounts for their backward condition compared with other tribes speaking the *pana* language who inhabit the banks of the navigable rivers.

One of their most objectionable customs I did not see until the third day. Several Indians had been out fishing with spears on one of the numerous rafts. When they returned with several impaled monsters which appeared to be *paiche*, two children licked the blood which had trickled from the wound in the fish caused by the spear-thrust. As several men and women were standing round the raft at the time and took no notice of the doings of their offspring it was evidently a custom. It may well be that this is the *alpha* and *omega* of their cannibalism, and it is also the custom which gave them the name of *vampires*. In fact, notwithstanding their apparent assertions relative to devouring their parents and friends, I am inclined to believe that this is merely a religious ceremony involving the drinking of a certain quantity of blood and not the eating of human flesh.

The reason for this belief lies principally in the fact that almost every Indian tribe in Amazonia derives its tribal name from that custom which differs most from those of its neighbours. This is exemplified in a remarkable degree, as already shown, among the Uaupés of the tributaries of the Upper Rio Negro.

Among the Vampire Indians of

That its application as a principle is, however, not restricted to one nation is proved by almost every tribal name in the great forest valley. If this theory is acceptable the Vampire Indians, or Cashibos, have probably derived both their name and their terrible reputation from their custom of drinking quantities of both animal and human blood.

I remained six days with this interesting tribe, who, when the natural distrust of the savage had been allayed, did not appear to be more fierce and intractable than many of the races met with in Brazilian Amazonia. The Cashibos are haughty, reserved, and appear to be without a religious or moral code of a definite character. They certainly appear to have no liking for the white man, and probably, if half the stories told have even a percentage of truth, they have no cause to either trust or love him and his works. They keep away from the frequented rivers as much as possible, and, from the explanation given by one of those who guided us to and from the village, send only two or three of their number to sell sarsaparilla and barter for essential stores at the outposts of the commercial world. I obtained from this tribe several samples of raw sarsaparilla and other medicinal herbs of which they appear to have a wonderful knowledge. They always carry a small bag of salt when out hunting or fighting with which to treat poisoned wounds. They consider it a specific against almost all forms of disease, and really seem to have a far greater knowledge of its many uses than most civilized people. The salt is obtained from natural pans in the centre of the Pampas Sacramento.

the Pampas Sacramento

Contrary to expectations my departure was facilitated rather than opposed. After repassing the curious mosquito colony, and being so severely bitten that my eyes were almost closed with the swelling, the open river was reached at last. The light zephyrs coming from the distant snow-capped Andes combined with the breeze of passage made by the river steamer, picked up at Masisea, were ecstasy after the heat and insects of the Pampas Sacramento.

On the way up the Ucayali to the country of the Campas tribes it rained, thundered and lightened almost incessantly. When we arrived at the Bocca Pachitea, where the main stream is joined by its principal tributaries, the storm clouds rolled away over the million-mile Equatorial forest to the eastward, the sun blazed with tropical brilliance, and the river and distant lines of low, jungle-covered Andean foothills were partially enveloped in steamy vapour.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHUNCHOS OF THE PERUVIAN MONTAÑA

THE Campas tribes inhabit the foothills of the Andes and what is known as the Upper Montaña of Peru. The best approach to this country is by way of the Perené river, in latitude $10^{\circ} 5' S.$ and longitude $75^{\circ} 15' W.$ They are of a totally different type to the savages of the great Amazon forests, and as an Indian nation are of considerable interest, although rapidly dwindling in numbers where brought into contact with frontier civilization. From the broad Pachitea river the small steamer passed into the chocolate-coloured Pichis and came to a final halt at a delectable spot called Puerto Bermudez. Owing to the low river and shallow water ahead, the remainder of the journey had to be accomplished first in canoes and then on mule-back to Government Tambo (or rest-house) No. 71, situated close to the Perené river. In a previous volume—*The Real South America*—I gave a descriptive account of a journey over the snow-blocked passes of the Andes and by river-ways to Iquitos, which makes it unnecessary to repeat here the petty trials and troubles experienced on this short section of the route.

The scenery in this portion of the Upper Montaña of Peru is truly wonderful. Forest-covered hills, splashing, foaming rivers, tropical jungles of feathery

Chunchos of the Peruvian Montana

palms and massive cotton-trees, wild banana groves and cultivated coffee plantations, gorgeous butterflies and birds, all mingle in a riot of colour between the red earth and the blue sky. Unlike the sombre twilight of the Equatorial forests of the Amazon flats, these jungles are tropical, gay and broken by rocks, streams and tiny, brightly carpeted oases of sunlight. Even the trees have parasitic growths which hang from their branches in clusters of red and green; and the sky is no longer a brazen vault. The climate, except during the rains, is delightful, with a warm sun and a cool breeze.

I had intended making my temporary headquarters on this river, at Tambo 71, on what is locally known as the *Via Central* (mule-track from Puerto Bermudez to Oroya and the Pacific), but the disgraceful condition of this dâk bungalow caused me to go on for another twenty miles to the far cleaner rest-house at Eneñas. From here I intended first to explore the country around, and then to hire mules, or go by raft into the Campas country. After resting at this place for several days to recover from the mosquito bites and a low fever, I succeeded in engaging the services of a *Serrano* guide and a Chuncho boy. The former was a dirty but energetic hill Indian, while the latter was a slothful but clean native of the Montaña.

My first camp after leaving the Tambo at Eneñas was on the banks of the Perené river, ten miles to the eastward of the little settlement. There are two great drawbacks to camping in this region, and on this particular night we experienced them both. Soon after a magnificent but very stormy sunset rain came

The Chunchos of the

in a steady downpour which lasted nearly the whole night. The dripping leaves, the hiss and patter on the canvas roof, and the rivulets which came running under the ground-sheet, notwithstanding a shallow and hastily dug trench, made the first few hours sleepless and depressing. Then, when the tent light was put out, there came the mysterious flapping of many wings. At first it seemed like several small birds which had become trapped in the tent, but a flash from the electric torch revealed at least six *vamperos* hovering overhead waiting for their supper of human blood!

Clearing the tent was quite useless, so numerous are these repulsive bats in this region. If they once succeed in beginning their foul work without disturbing the sleeper, great weakness will result from the loss of blood. Under these circumstances, beyond the protection afforded by the mosquito net, nothing could be done, and until one gets accustomed to these loathsome visitors of the night little sleep is obtained.

Dawn had scarcely lightened the eastern sky before I gave up any further attempt at sleep, and instead walked down to the river and prepared for a swim. While drying myself and feeling very cold, owing to the temperature of the water, which was but recently melted snow from the Andean summits, a *balsa* appeared round a bend in the river. Having my back turned in this direction, and being very busy rubbing vigorously, I did not notice the approach of this craft until it was less than twenty yards distant.

In the bright sunlight of the early morning this family of Chuncho Indians gazed in astonishment at the whitish blue apparition on the stony shore.

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Arranging one of the towels in the form of a *tanga*, I moved to the edge of the water and made signs for the *balsa* to come closer. Being anxious not to lose such an early opportunity of discovering the locality of an Indian village, I disregarded both chilliness and décolleté toilet. Afterwards I keenly regretted my impetuosity.

On the long, thin raft, which is called a *balsa* because it is made of a very light wood of the same name, were two men in long *cusmas*, a woman and two half-naked children. The men were well made although not very tall, and round their long black hair they wore a circlet of leaves. In colour they were of a very pale bronze shade. When the *balsa* had been poled on to the stony beach these wild-looking natives crowded round curiously. The children considered me a new and queer specimen, and while I was carrying on a conversation by vigorous signs they amused themselves by prodding my legs and peering round most annoyingly.

It transpired that the nearest village was some distance down-stream, although exactly how far it was impossible to discover, because, like all other uncivilized or semi-civilized natives, they seemed to have only very vague ideas of time, distance or quantity. The name "Chuncho" is given to a group of tribes living in the foothills of the Peruvian Montaña to the eastward of Cuzco and Tarma. In general characteristics they resemble the Campas of the more remote forests but are less hostile to white men. Later on, when I had lived among these people, it seemed that they must surely form a branch of the great Campas

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nation, considering how closely the two supposedly separate groups resemble each other in both appearance and custom.

Having discovered the whereabouts of their village, and noted various characteristics which gave me the clue to their tribal identity, I was anxious that they should depart so that I could finish dressing in decency. Having nothing to give them in the form of a present, I endeavoured to explain this by pointing in the direction of my camp. To my utter astonishment they gravely squatted down, apparently resigned to wait until I was dressed and could accompany them to the tent, which was about half-a-mile, through thick underbush, from the river bank. The sun was rapidly gaining power, and although at present only just thawing my limbs, it would soon begin blistering my skin. Furthermore, the mosquitoes had smelt blood and were buzzing round in a most disconcerting fashion. To go through the bush even as far as the tent without dressing would be asking the myriads of insects to make their morning meal, which would in all probability detain me in camp for days.

Ignoring the presence of these nomads of the forest, I dressed as quickly as possible and accompanied them to the tent, where I distributed both presents and a free breakfast. Later in the day I induced the father of this bronze family to convey myself and retinue down-stream on the *balsa* to the village of his tribe. Having neither mules nor water transport myself, this lift was doubly welcome. This Indian quite cheerfully left his wives and their families encamped on the banks of the Perené while he returned to the village with my

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outfit. Evidently I was not the first white man whom he had met, as is but natural in this partially developed region. In addition to demanding thirty dollars for the journey, and asking for payment in advance, it turned out that the village was less than fifteen miles distant! However, all the uncivilized Indians of the Amazon Valley are so terribly poverty-stricken that they scarcely possess anything at all. Sometimes the sight is piteous. The merest trifle when given them becomes a priceless gift, and their gratitude, although not always openly shown at first because of distrust, is often pathetic.

The Chuncho village consisted of six long and fairly well-made huts of chonta palm, in which lived nearly a hundred men, women and children. They were situated on a stony hill which sloped down to the waters of the Middle Perené. The dwellings of this tribe were immeasurably superior to those of both the Cashibos and Conibos of the Ucayali. Several had projecting roofs, supported by the stems of trees, and a few were partially made of roughly hewn boards. On the surrounding hill-sides there were small plantations of maize, yuca and banana. A curious feature was the entire absence of canoes. Evidently this tribe use the *balsa* as their only means of transport. None of the tribes of Equatorial America breeds horses, mules or cattle, unless taught to do so by their white masters. The Chunchos walk for miles through the matted forest and over the steep hill-sides in search of game. In their *balsas* they undertake long river journeys, often of a hundred miles or more. But they are very superstitious.

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A queer custom, which I learned on my first night in their village, is to congregate together in their huts or out in the open directly the short twilight ends. If there is no moon or the night is very dark they will not leave the camp. At first I was somewhat puzzled by this, and was inclined to put it down to laziness. Further investigation, however, revealed the fact that all the Indians of this important group are afraid to be alone in complete darkness. Their belief is that evil spirits haunt every shadow, and even on a moon-light night, while walking through the village or forest, they skirt round the dark patches. The only tribe previously met with who gave any indication of a similar superstition were the Apiacas of the Upper Tapajós, who, it will be remembered, stabbed the shadows with their spears during their moon-dances.

As each day among this tribe passed by it became increasingly evident that they have no definite religious belief beyond a series of superstitions based on the powers of light and darkness. The dead are buried beneath the mud floor of their huts, regardless of the presence therein not only of the relatives of the deceased but also other families. It happened that I saw one of these graves prepared for an old man who was then so much alive that, guessing his fate, he walked from his bed into the jungle and disappeared. This empty tomb was only four feet deep.

Although the Chunchos appeared to be a quiet, inoffensive people, I met in Amazonia, quite recently, Mr Miles Moss, the well-known naturalist, who lived among them some years ago, and he very kindly gave me some facts he had collected at the time which

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create doubt on this point. He explained that although their past is lost in obscurity they seemed, to him, a mild, peaceable and intelligent race, wonderfully neat and skilled in what may be termed home industries, however limited in kind these may be. Excellent marksmen with the bow and arrow, they are, however, of rather small stature, but splendidly built and often quite handsome. They take readily to the water, and are cleaner in their habits and customs than the half-breed *Serranos*, or hill Indians. He then supplemented these personal observations, which coincided with my own views, by the following information which he had received in a letter from a Mr Furlong, whose authority was based upon thirteen years' residence in these regions. Along with their gentler qualities these Chunchos have bad traits, for which, when considered in the light of ignorance and their utter want of any religion higher than a mere superstitious dread of the unknown, they can hardly be blamed. Filial affection is not a deeply implanted instinct in them, and human life is but little esteemed, and so it comes about that murder is accounted nothing. If a widow with a young family marries again, it is the all but universal practice for the second husband thus to dispose of her children. Mr Furlong has from time to time given shelter at his camp to such unfortunates, and during his travels in the far interior made the acquaintance of an old German couple who had become the foster-parents of an adopted family of twenty-four Chuncho girls and boys. These children would otherwise have been murdered.

It is a common occurrence for a son to throw his

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parents into the river when, through the infirmity of advancing years, life becomes a burden either to themselves or to those upon whom they depend for support. On one occasion Mr Furlong had the greatest difficulty in restraining some Chunchos from throwing into the Perené a man who was suffering from a bad abscess, and it would appear that all cases of disease deemed incurable are despatched in a similar manner.

The history of the Chunchos is a closed book. Beyond some curious and as yet undeciphered inscriptions on a huge boulder in the bed of the Paucartambo river, and a number of stone and copper axe-heads found near the Hill of San Juan, little or nothing is known of the origin of this large Indian nation.

On my fifth day in the Chuncho village I accompanied the *Huayri*, or chief, on a visit by *balsa* to a more isolated village of the same tribe situated farther down the Perené. The huts at this place were very poor, and consisted of palm-thatched roofs on four supports without side walls. The people were more suspicious of white men, and I had great difficulty in even examining some curious neck-chains of green stones interspersed with monkeys' teeth.

The natives of this village also wore head-bands made of parrots' feathers, and their faces were disfigured by streaks of vermilion, a dye obtained from the seeds of the *achiote*. Growing wild in these jungles, this bush produces pretty flowers together with maroon- (and green-) coloured seed-pods, which yield the paint so largely used by the savage tribes of the whole Amazon Valley.

The sub-tribal chief in this village, together with

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his wife, son and daughter, positively refused to be left out of any photograph taken in his dominion. This was the first occasion when I had been able to use the camera with impunity among uncivilized Indians in Amazonia, with the possible exception of the Caripunas of the Madeira and the Ocainas of the Rio Putumayo.

After remaining at this second Chuncho village for one night, to enable my camp equipment to be brought up by *balsa*, I succeeded in obtaining two Chunchos and a raft to convey me down to the junction of the Perené and Ené rivers with the Rio Tambo. In the lower-lying and more dense tropical forests of this region dwell several tribes of the great Campas family, known as the Ungoninos, who are hostile to white travellers because of the treatment they have received at the hands of half-breed rubber gatherers.

The *Serrano* who had accompanied me from the Tambo on the *Via Centrale* refused to go into the Ungoninos country, and I therefore had to make very costly and difficult arrangements with the Chunchos to return him safe and sound to the bosom of his unwashed family, now forty-nine miles distant.

The most awkward part of this journey into the little-known Lower Montaña was having no one who could even make a pretence at cooking in the European sense. The one civilized and two uncivilized Chunchos who were now with me on the rickety *balsa* could neither make camp nor speak anything but a few words of Spanish. The two days and nights poling down-stream to the junction of the three rivers seemed interminable. Hours were spent without a word or sound beyond the

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movement of the river and the occasional screech of a bird. On the evening of the third day, however, we camped about ten miles above the junction of the Rio Tambo, and from then onwards, in addition to my other duties, I had also to keep watch all night. My plan was to sleep as much as possible during the day while comparatively safe on the *balsa* in mid-stream.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND OF THE UNGONINOS

WE met the Ugoninos suddenly, while rounding a bend in the river. A canoe and a large *balsa*, both full, as well as several groups on the right bank, barred our farther progress. For a few minutes things looked particularly ugly, as the raft would afford us no shelter from their arrows. This time the peace-making was not left to me. The Chunchos, who apparently speak the same, or a similar, language, carried on negotiations while the *balsas* drifted closer and closer together. At last the boy whom I had brought from the Tambo on the *Via Centrale* explained by signs and the few Spanish words understandable to us both that the "great" Ugoninos would allow me to visit them on the bank, as I had proved my friendship in the Chuncho villages, but that I should certainly be killed if I persisted in journeying farther up the forbidden river. Having heard from other travellers that this route to Iquitos is rendered impossible by this war-like tribe, I knew the truth of what the Chuncho boy tried his best to impress upon me, and was quick to tell him that I had no desire to pass through their dominion but only to visit them as a friend.

This being satisfactorily arranged, the *balsas* and canoes of both parties headed up a small creek between

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the tall, dark forest. After a mile or so of brown, oil-like water had been traversed in the green half-light we came to a few very crude palm-thatch huts on the high bank. In front of these was a motley collection of naked and half-naked yellow and dwarfed humanity. The landing was difficult and somewhat trying to the nerves. These diminutive savages all carried barbed spears, with the exception of a few who were armed with bows or blow-pipes (and poison gourds) about ten feet in length. Men, women and even children did not attempt to disguise their savage hatred of the white men as I stepped on to the bank.

Only the assurance of the uncivilized Chunchos, who were evidently on good terms with these neighbours, probably bartering for them in the settlements, saved me from instant death. Never before had I felt the same tense hatred as existed in this village on a creek of the Tambo. Distrust, suspicion or even dislike is to be expected, and wonder or curiosity is generally present to act as a check. Here, however, there was undisguised hatred in every look and gesture. The desire to kill was unchecked by either curiosity or the hope of receiving gifts. I held out a peace-offering in the form of several strings of coloured beads, but no one moved forward to take them. After waiting awkwardly for a minute or two I gave them to the two Chunchos to distribute, but they also were unsuccessful, as none of the Ugoninos would accept the gift.

In this dilemma I was on the point of re-embarking on the *balsa*, and taking the chance of being allowed to depart in safety, when a half-naked savage with a diadem of feathers, and carrying a murderous-looking

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barbed spear, stepped close up to me. Hatred blazed from his yellowish black eyes.

"*Kittamorori shambari ni kahmetta!*" he hissed in a curious guttural tone. Not knowing what he meant, however, we stood facing each other at a distance of about ten feet for several seconds. The Chuncho boy from the Tambo came to my rescue, and explained in bad Spanish that the chief had said: "White man no good."

It was common knowledge on the *chacras* along the *Via Centrale* that until the Peruvian Government had put a stop to the atrocities which were being carried on with impunity in all the remote regions of this wonderful land these Ungoninos tribes had suffered terribly at the hands of unscrupulous, immoral half-breeds. Their girls had been stolen, and the men, women and even children tortured when they refused to collect the precious latex. In those hectic days of sylvan gold the shooting of a few Indians was accounted nothing. It was this short-sighted as well as inhuman policy which has resulted in the thinning of the ranks of potential labour in the Amazon Valley by unknown thousands, and also in making the work of explorers, Indian officers and nation-making colonists extremely difficult and hazardous.

With these facts in mind I could only endeavour to explain that I had come merely to see and talk with the Ungoninos and not to barter for rubber. Somewhat appeased by this statement, made by signs and with the aid of the Chuncho boy, the look of hatred in the chief's face gave place to a sullen expression of distrust.

After this I moved circumspectly about the village,

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but was followed by two braves armed with lance-like spears. The Campas, or Antis, as they are sometimes called, embrace a very large number of tribes inhabiting the forests along the base of the Peruvian Andes. They are yellow-skinned and decidedly Asiatic in appearance. Some of the younger girls are by no means ugly, and the men are good hunters and canoemen. Many of them wear a circlet of flowers (called *nahmatteri*) round their heads of long black hair. This diadem is always worn when they are worshipping *Pahua*, the sun-god. Every atmospheric disturbance, such as thunder, lightning, rain, wind and dew, is attributed to the eternal war between good and evil. The long trousers which convert the European boy into a young man—at least in his own estimation—are here replaced by the killing with his own bow or spear of a really wild animal, and by suffering in silence certain physical tortures.

For the first two days nothing worthy of note occurred, but on the third morning I observed that the whole tribe had assembled in the little clearing between the huts. Some of the younger men tried by threats to prevent my joining the circle, but a judicious appeal to the chief, accompanied by a pound of tobacco, secured for me a reserved seat on the hard mud next to the royal box. The ceremony which followed was one of the most cruel I have ever witnessed, and in parts compelled me to keep a strong hold of my temper.

It appears that when a girl of the tribe attains the age of puberty she is immediately shut up alone in one of the queer-shaped huts in which the Ungoninos live, and is fed daily with a little cassava and water. In

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the meantime all the eligible youths of the tribe are assembled, and the girl is promised to the one offering the best present of game, fish, poison, hammocks, or other commodity, both to the tribal chief and to the parents. When the bridegroom has been finally chosen the girl is led from her temporary prison and, in the presence of the whole tribe, is bound naked to a tree-stump and flogged with whips of grass cord in which sharp stones have been plaited.

This barbarous proceeding is accompanied by the blowing of conches and the beating of sticks on hollow tree trunks. Then the witch-doctor commands the supposed evil spirits to leave the girl and enter the tree stump to which she is tied, simultaneously cutting the thongs holding her bleeding body to the upright post. A wild cry goes up from the tribe when the girl falls forward in a faint, as it is looked upon as a good sign, so evil was the demon driven out by the flogging that the new spirit of docility needs time before it enters its lifelong home.

The unfortunate damsel is carried away, her wounds washed, and the bridegroom is informed that she has been freed of evil. The women dance round the stake, against which branches are heaped in readiness for the return of the bridegroom, who appears about an hour later bearing a flaming torch. After apostrophizing the demon who would have harmed the girl he desired to marry, he lights the dry twigs placed around, and burns demon and post to the accompaniment of frenzied dancing, the blowing of conches, the rattle of a kind of tom-tom and, incidentally, low moans of agony from the tortured girl bride.

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This cruel ceremony is followed by several hours of feasting and drinking, and then comes a real exhibition of dancing and slashing the body with knives by the young braves. Towards evening the girls who are nearing the marriageable age are held on the ground while the hairs of their eyebrows are pulled out one by one with a piece of split cane. Lines are then painted over the eyes with a blue-black dye. Throughout the following night the feasting and drinking continued. It is a common practice for both men and women to take a strong emetic and then return to the feast.

Unlike the Ocainas and Itogapuks, there are absolutely no likeable traits in the character of the Ungoninos. They are fierce, cruel and treacherous. They are in continual conflict with neighbouring tribes, and their country extends from the Tambo and Upper Ucayali to the Madre de Dios.

The huts of the Ungoninos are similar to the dwellings of the Chunchos, which tribe would also appear to be of the Campas family. They all live very largely on fish, yuca and fruit, supplemented by game of all kinds killed in the forest. Their method of hunting consists of lying flat on their *balsas*, which are pushed into the tall grass bordering the streams. From this point of vantage they shoot, with poisoned arrows, any big game coming to the river edge to drink, and with harpoon-arrows, attached by a thin line, any big fish, such as the *paiche*, which rises to the surface, or betrays its presence by bubbles.

They fix their lines, which are made of gut, to a detachable arrow-head. When the shaft pierces the fish the barbed head becomes detached and remains

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embedded in the flesh, while the shaft drops free and is lost. The bow from which these arrows are fired is worked by the feet. The catch is hauled close into the bank by the line from the barbed head, but it is often necessary for the fishermen to plunge into the water in order finally to secure some of the big, almost shark-like fish which inhabit these rivers, and there is considerable mortality among the natives owing to the caymans which lie basking in the sun or floating idly, like half-submerged logs, with the current.

The aged and infirm of this tribe are buried alive at their own request. A deep hole is dug in the ground, and after a last feast, in which the whole tribe takes part, the victim is helped into the grave, standing upright, with face turned towards the village, while the earth is gently filled in. The depth of the hole is so regulated that the eyes remain above the surface until after death, when a small mound is erected to cover the head.

The Ungoninos chew coca, smoke tobacco, made up into cigarettes with the aid of an outer covering of leaves, and imbibe vast quantities of a highly intoxicating drink made of fermented fruit juice. Many of their cruel ceremonies are performed while under the influence of these drugs. Young girls before the barbarous marriage ceremony are usually rendered almost insensible with intoxicants. These curious people seem to ignore the fact that the deadening effects of their concoctions wear off very quickly under the great pain inflicted.

The men of other Campas tribes wear long *cusmas*, but the Ungoninos go about almost entirely naked,

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and adorn themselves with necklaces of the teeth of alligators, jaguars, human beings and small rodents. In many ways they resemble the Cashibos more than the true Campas family. There is little doubt that they have become a very mixed tribe.

The Lower Montaña of Peru could well be called the land of the morning mist. White vapours curl about the dim forest aisles and over the river banks until long after sunrise. Terrible tropical storms are common nearly all the year round, but the climate is not so unhealthy as that of many Amazonian river valleys. Farther east, however, in the dense Equatorial jungles of the Madre de Dios and Beni rivers there are, literally, valleys of death, such as the *Mapiri*, where curious ague-malarial fevers are so prevalent that no European can enter them without suffering almost immediately. The cause is still as obscure as are the fevers themselves.

It is considered by Velasco that the Campas tribes are descendants of the Incas of the Andean Tableland. With this view, however, I entirely disagree. Having travelled among the Aymaras (Incas) and Cholos (half-breeds) of the great Andean Plateau, I can find nothing in common between the hill-men and the forest natives. Having been nearer to the civilization of the Spanish Imperial regime, some of the tribes along the base of the Andes are at a slightly higher cultural level than those in the heart of the great Amazon forests, but others, it should be remembered, are among the most fierce in the whole continent. The fact that they generally wear some form of covering has been used as evidence of a higher state. This also is largely

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erroneous, as many who wear the *cusma* while in contact with civilization discard it when they return to their forest homes. Those who wear this garment in their villages, such as the Chunchos, do so largely because they dwell close to the mountains, from which cool breezes descend after nightfall.

The deep-rooted dislike and suspicion of the white man by the Ungoninos rendered any very elaborate investigations of their life, customs and beliefs impossible to carry out. My movements were closely watched by armed guards. Only a few of the younger members of the tribe, whose memory did not go back to the darkest days of persecution, would talk to me for any length of time, and it was obvious that every day the temper of the tribe grew more sullen and dangerous. Reluctantly I abandoned the quest after four days. When the *balsa* reached mid-stream a flight of arrows splashed suggestively in the water behind the craft. The Chunchos bent the poles in their effort to hasten the passage of the light raft towards the open river, and in so doing very nearly tipped me off the flat surface into the alligator-infested chocolate-coloured water.

Seven days later I mounted a mule and rode up the rough track towards the distant, glittering line of the Great White Cordillera. It was a curious sensation to emerge from the murky forests and steaming rivers on to the great Andean prairies, or *pajonales*, and finally the snowy passes. I had crossed the continent at its widest and least-known part; ahead lay the Pacific, the ships and the cool sea breezes. Once or twice I stopped to gaze back over the most wonderful Equatorial

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forests in the world, those of the Amazon Valley. Deep down below, stretching away to the blue-grey, mist-enveloped horizon—and 3000 miles beyond—lay this mysterious region of sylvan twilight, desolation and decay, which in past years I had traversed and crossed in various directions. In many a dark aisle, open clearing and oily river there were savage men, women and children who might sometimes remember the passing of the white man and his gifts, but none who would mourn through the wanton crack of his rifle.

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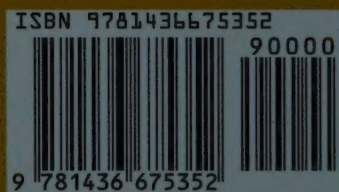
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